India's Nuclear Journey Nuclear Discourse and Decisions, 1997-2009

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Abstract

India is presently debating different nuclear strategies. However, the correspondence of these public debates to nuclear policy decisions has not been significantly investigated. It has further been claimed that India has no strategic culture or substantive defence discourse. This thesis investigates Indian nuclear strategic discourse from 1997-2009. It utilises a discourse analysis methodology, with opinion articles on Indian nuclear policy published in English-language Indian newspapers as its primary sources. It investigates the relationship of policy options as developed in strategic discourse to the following government policy decision, and the major influences on India's nuclear policy as recognised by strategic discourse, including the role of India's emerging nuclear force capabilities, and whether these change over the period of study.

It finds that India possesses a nuclear strategic culture, primarily characterised by the organising value of nuclear minimalism. However, this organising value is more pronounced in security crisis discourses and is coming under progressively strong contestation by an alternative organising value of nuclear maximalism in peacetime doctrinal nuclear policy discourses. Strategic culture, which is produced by strategic discourse on specific policy dilemmas, has an input in the policymaking process. The first or second most popular policy option within the discourse, with a strong base of centrist political support, tends to correlate with the policy decision. India's nuclear force capabilities have a primary, and increasingly maximalist, influence on discourses, as the third most cited influence overall in the study.

These findings importantly develop research on Indian defence, discourse analysis, and strategic culture. To most efficiently safeguard India, New Delhi should recognise the resilience of nuclear minimalism as the dominant organising value of strategic culture when a crisis emerges, and apply this value to its nuclear planning in peacetime, when maximalist values obtain greater support.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

India stands at a new juncture in its nuclear history. Over the last fifteen years, New Delhi has navigated more shifts in its nuclear status than arguably any other nuclear state. Over this period, India has moved from opacity to renewed nuclear tests, declarative arsenal possession and doctrine issuance, then a nuclear agreement with the United States, to its present position of considering different arsenal postures and some form of structural rapprochement with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the historic bête noire of Indian nuclear strategists. This is all the more remarkable given the glacial pace of nuclear history in other states, with the nuclear forces of France, Russia and United Kingdom serving largely as vestiges of their Cold War years, while the United States and China still determine the post-Cold War missions of their nuclear arsenals, over twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After decades of multilateral sanctions, Western distancing from India due to its nuclear status, and general academic problematisation of India vis-a-vis the global nonproliferation regime rather than the other way round, India now enjoys implicit Western recognition of its nuclear arsenal and is no longer inhibited by technological sanctions. This combines with new successes in its indigenous nuclear development efforts, crystallised by the successful test of the Agni-V missile in April 2012, and a booming economy to underpin greater defence projection possibilities in future. India is therefore today more free with regard to its nuclear options than ever before.[1] Indeed, one analyst has said that despite India's complex and dramatic nuclear history, *"the story may only just be beginning"*.[2]

This topic is of great and growing analytical importance. The nuclear decisions India makes in the next few years will substantively impact: its trajectory as a rising power; the balancing of its economic development and defence requirements; its civil-military relations; ideas as how to resolve seemingly intractable conflicts with Pakistan and China; the future of the Nonproliferation Treaty-based global nonproliferation regime; and the international discourse

[1] Verghese Koithara, *Managing India's Nuclear Forces* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012) p. 5.

[2] Priyanjali Mailk, *India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010) p. 310.

surrounding the political and military purposes of nuclear weapons in the twenty-first century, including the likelihood and worth of nuclear disarmament as a policy objective.

India's nuclear options are part of a broader story. New Delhi is presently debating and considering different strategies to determine and guide its rise to power, and best match its national resources to pursuing certain policy objectives. These discourses, and the decisionmaking processes and institutions shaped by them, are the subject of growing academic interest, signifying their importance to the history of the twenty-first century. However, much remains to be done in tracing and explaining these dynamics.

India continues to attract less Western academic attention comparative to studies of the nuclear intentions of China and Pakistan, and is often presented as part of a nuclear combine, for example in the above Asian triad or in that of Nonproliferation Treaty outliers, rather than as an individual nuclear power meriting its own dedicated study.[3] However, India's nuclear options and how it decides among these holds great import for the future of nuclear weapons globally, and has broader consequences for the security landscape of the 21st century. My study enhances the scholarship on this topic, by investigating how India is presently navigating its nuclear force dilemmas.

Dedicated research on Indian nuclear affairs tends to become the domain of area specialists.[4] As nuclear policy is subject to and part of domestic policymaking and political processes,

[3] See, for example, T.V. Paul, "Chinese-Pakistani Nuclear/Missile Ties and Balance of Power Politics", Nonproliferation Review Vol. 10 No. 2 (Summer 2003); S. Ghoshroy and G. Neuneck (eds.) *South Asia at a Crossroads: Conflict or Cooperation in the Age of Nuclear Weapons, Missile Defense and Space Rivalries* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010); S. Sagan (ed.) *Inside Nuclear South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[4] See notable works in this field, including Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Security and the Postcolonial State* (London: Zed Books, 1998); George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Ashley Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2001); Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy (Second Edition)* (Macmillan India: New Delhi, 2005); Harsh V. Pant, *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy: India Negotiates its Rise in the International System* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernization* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010); Koithara, *Managing India's Nuclear Forces*.

previous academic works have sought to generate several explanatory models for how Indian policymakers and analysts perceive, decide and justify policy responses to foreign and security policy questions. Analysts largely agree on the set of domestic and international influences driving foreign policy, which range from the necessity of building a working relationship in the United States in a unipolar world, to ensuring foreign policy meets the interests of the growing business and middle classes in an economically liberalising society, to integrating a new generation of policymakers, less wedded to the policy dictates of a previous era, into the policy process.

However, a deeper question concerns the sources of these Indian policy perspectives. The process by which security perceptions are generated and built into policy approaches must also be brought into account, if we are to understand how India is shaping its nuclear policy. This seems an obvious point, but is strikingly only beginning to be done in research on Indian nuclear policy.

In identifying these value sources, the values generated, and their integration into policy, we must investigate an additional academic construct, that of "strategic culture". Alastair Iain Johnston defines strategic culture as

> *"an integrated set of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious."*[5]

Strategic culture as a term plays host to some of the thorniest debates in the academic discipline of international relations, in which most of the problems associated with the discipline of developing and applying objective tools to analyse subjective and often immaterial influences on policy come to the fore. The academic debate on the nature, influence and utility of strategic culture as an analytical subject has been notable for the

[5] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", International Security Vol. 19 No. 4 (Spring 1995) p. 46; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

degree of heat as well as light generated, but a workable definition of strategic culture can be derived from it for the purposes of my study.

The exchanges between Johnston and Colin S. Gray sit at the gravitational centre of the academic discourse on strategic culture. Johnston, from a positivist perspective, argues that strategic culture can be abstracted from policymaking and its influence on the process measured, and defines the term as constituting a coherent idealised order and structuring of certain policies to achieve it.

Gray, on the other hand, takes this positivism as his target, claiming from a Clausewitzian perspective that strategic culture serves as one of several specific factors determining the conduct of war, but as it exists both in human minds and behaviour, it cannot be given a universal definition. Gray nevertheless produces one anyway as an intended counter to Johnston, inadvertently confirming that strategic culture can be abstracted from policymaking behaviour for purposes of analytical inquiry. Other contributions to the debate utilise the Johnston-Gray discourse as a starting point or foil, but its core lesson, which animates my study, is that strategic culture is not merely important to understanding policymaking but can also be studied using positivist approaches.

Academic attempts have been made to identify strategic culture in the Indian context. Tanham aims to demonstrate that strategic culture – any strategic culture – is entirely absent from India. In contrast to Tanham, Bajpai identifies three Indian paradigms within Indian strategic culture, with the eventual victor of these contests or victorious synthesis of these paradigms posed to drive subsequent Indian statecraft.

I argue that a strategic culture is evidently at work in India. I agree with Johnston's definition of strategic culture as cited above, but argue that it largely manifests itself in the form of strategic discourse by a state security community as applied to specific, individually unique questions concerning the prospective use of force.

Following from this definition, my study identifies and characterises Indian strategic culture as applied to its nuclear force questions over the previous decade (1997-2009). The project enhances the academic literature on strategic culture in the general international relations

discipline and our understanding of it in the Indian context, while also analysing its influence to explain a notably underresearched timeframe of Indian nuclear history.

It should be noted at the outset of this project that cultural influences on policy, by their nature, ineluctably operate, but can be highly difficult to discern, as can their degree and working of causality. Given that strategic culture is mainly concerned with the perception of material factors (for example military balances) as subjectively informed by domestic political and historical experiences, it is true that, as Gray argues, strategic culture is omnipresent. It is thus more challenging to isolate and categorise as an independent variable than shifts in material conditions in explaining policy transitions.

For these reasons, strategic culture thus cannot be held as a single dominant casual influence in explaining state policies, in terms of mirroring the international power structure held as the dominant influence by Waltz. The hypothesis of this project is instead that strategic culture shapes the agenda of policy options available to policymakers, dismissing some options as unacceptable and perhaps promoting others through discursive consensus. The policymaker always has the agency to choose among these options, or construct and select an option not on the agenda. The project investigates whether strategic culture has this input in the policymaking process, and if so, in what ways and situations.

The three research questions that my thesis answers are:

I. Does Indian nuclear strategic culture, as produced by strategic discourse, serve as the main framer of nuclear force policy choices faced by India's leaders?
II. Does dominant opinion in Indian nuclear strategic discourse correlate to nuclear force policymaking?
III. Are the new nuclear capabilities available to India following the 1998 tests encouraging a reconsideration of India's nuclear posture and doctrine in strategic discourse?

The research project involves a survey of editorial and opinion articles on Indian nuclear force policy in major English-language Indian newspapers over the timeframe 1997-2009. This reproduces the strategic discourse that surrounded each policy decision. This process allows us to see the views on nuclear weapons that characterised each discourse; the

perceptions of relevant influences (for example the stances of United States and Pakistan, India's global image, and influences of the government nuclear scientific complex) on the specific nuclear policy question; and the policy options developed by the discourse.

These aspects of the discourse are then measured against the eventual government nuclear policy decision, examining whether there was any correspondence between the two. My hypothesis is that strategic discourse has an input in the policymaking process, and that policy decisions will tend to correlate with one of the policy options developed by the strategic discourse.

The seven major nuclear policy decisions over this timeframe that are the subject of our study constitute:

I. 1997-8 – Shift of Nuclear Policy Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests
II. 1998-9 – New Nuclear Doctrine
III. 1999 – Role of Nuclear Weapons in Kargil War Crisis
IV. 2001-2 – Role of Nuclear Weapons in Parliament Attacks Crisis
V. 2001-3 – New Nuclear Doctrine
VI. 2005-8 – Implement Civil Nuclear Agreement with United States
VII. 2008-9 – Role of Nuclear Weapons in Mumbai Attacks Crisis

These case studies collectively form the principal nuclear policy decisions undertaken by Indian political leaders in this timeframe from 1997-2009. There were other Indian nuclear developments in this timeframe, such as individual technical missile tests. However, these constituted comparatively minor nuclear developments that were guided by the above major political decisions.[6] These developments were organised by defence bureaucratic agencies, and did not require a decision from the Prime Minister and his most senior elected officials as the seven case studies above did. The major political decisions on nuclear policy are the focus of this study.

[6] See, for example, BBC News staff, "India Tests Ballistic Missile", BBC News, April 11, 1999; and Press Trust of India, "Agni-III Test Fired by India", Indian Express, July 9, 2006.

As we will see in the literature review below, a study of this timeframe with these case studies will fill important gaps in the existing academic literature on this topic. The notable differences among the case studies, each posing a unique challenge to Indian nuclear thought and planning, will allow us to refine our understanding of Indian nuclear discourse and policy.

The case studies divide into two main categories. One category consists of major security crisis episodes, in which the policy question was one of use or non-use of nuclear weapons. The Kargil war, 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis, and 2008-9 Mumbai attacks crisis episodes fall into this category. The second category consists of peacetime decisions concerning nuclear declaratory policy. This category captures the remaining episodes – the 1997-8 shift toward overt nuclear deterrence, the 1998-9 decision on a new nuclear doctrine, the 2001-3 decision on a second nuclear doctrine, and the 2005-8 decision on implementing a civil nuclear agreement with the United States. This specific timeframe and selection of case studies will therefore make substantial contributions to the academic literature and provide a comprehensive overall understanding of Indian nuclear thought and policy.

In designing this study, a high degree of correlation of discursive policy recommendation and policy decision would most strongly validate my hypothesis of strategic discourse having an input in the policymaking process. My assumption would be undermined where there is real consistent dissensus between the recommended policy and the policy selected – where the policy selected has no apparent relationship with the discursive landscape on the policy dilemma and does not map on the discursive spectrum as a recommended option. This would suggest that other variables, perhaps bureaucratic politics internal to government, dominate the policymaking process. This finding would entail a reduced role for strategic culture, as generated by strategic discourse, in explaining Indian nuclear policymaking.

A third alternative research outcome could be that findings divide into around half supporting my "strategic culture" hypothesis, and around half suggesting a "disconnect" antithesis. The input of strategic culture, as defined above, may operate in some nuclear circumstances but not others. This would result in a modification of my original hypothesis, to explain the reasons for this limited operation of strategic culture and its seeming irrelevance in some circumstances.

My hypothesis would be supported if the nuclear policies selected by government repeatedly correlated with one of the policy options, or a combination of more than one policy option, as produced by the strategic discourse concerning those topics. It would be undermined by repeated instances of the government policy having no visible correspondence with the policy options developed by the discourse. This would suggest that strategic culture did not have this policymaking input, and that other inputs instead dominated the policymaking process.

In instances where the government policy measure correlates with an option from the discourse, the study would then focus on the second research question: whether policies tend to correlate with more popular as opposed to less popular policy options developed in the discourse. This element of the study would look in more detail at the attributes of successful policy options, such as their level of popularity comparative to other policy options, and their political support base. This will allow us to see if there are any commonalities to successful policy options that make their correlation with government policy more or less likely depending on their possession of these attributes.

The third research question is investigated by analysing the various perceived influences within the strategic discourse on India's nuclear policy in each episode, and among them the nature and degree of influence on Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as compared to other influences. Understanding which issues were seen as most influential, and in what way, is essential for providing the fullest reconstruction of the strategic discourse.

The hypothesis for this research question is that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements serves as a prominent influence in the strategic discourse, and is a core perceived influence for changing Indian attitudes to the nuclear force over the course of our study. Each article is coded for whether it mentions the following perceived influences, and analysed for how these influences are presented:

Table 1: Hypothesised Influences Affecting Indian Nuclear Strategic Discourse, 1997-2009

Type	Perceived Influences
Domestic	1. Bureaucratic Influences 2. Nuclear Force Technical Advancements 3. Domestic Partisan Politics 4. Nuclear Doctrine 5. Economic and Developmental Needs
International – State-specific	6. Indian Global Aspirations 7. Chinese Pressures 8. Pakistani Pressures 9. American Pressures 10. Other State-specific Pressures
International – Thematic	11. NPT Membership Pressures 12. CTBT and FMCT Pressures 13. Disarmament Pressures

1.1 Methodology

Several models of combined mixed-methods approach have been developed, including using quantitative data to give qualitiative answers, or conducting parallel qualitative and quantitative research and using the results to cross-verify, modify or synthesise ultimate findings.[7] However, the former approach lies at the heart of the methodology developed by Frey for a project similar to my own. I will now consider the formulation developed by Frey in terms of its value and applicability to our topic.

Frey initially recognises that generation of original research on this particular topic by a principally interview-based approach will quickly yield inadequate and potentially misleading data, as interviewees knowledgeable about Indian nuclear policy in operational terms, particularly deriving from official experience, are highly likely to be unable or

[7] S. Terrell, "Mixed-Methods Research Methodologies", Qualitative Report Vol. 17 No. 1 (January 2012).

unwilling to share such highly sensitive information.[8] The absence of rigorous declassification rules in India make authoritative analyses of internal government policy discussions a difficult task, and prospects of cabinet discussions surrounding nuclear questions coming to public light remain remote at best. Tracing strategic discourse, with its influences on policy construction regularly observed in the literature review, offers the most useful strategy to analyse Indian nuclear debates in the present context.

Frey aims to: analyse Indian nuclear discourse over time (1986-2005); identify transitions in nuclear discourse; when they occurred; the nuances underpinning these transitions; and their consequences. His units of analysis are articles focusing on nuclear policy from five Indian English-language newspapers, from which he extracts a random sample.

Frey develops three quantitative instruments of measurement to code the articles and then generate numerical results. These are, firstly, an attitude scale to measure article opinions toward Indian nuclear weapons; secondly, a time-series analysis to understand transitions in the opinion weighting of the nuclear debate over time; and thirdly, a polarisation index to measure the degree of consensus and/or dissensus within strategic discourse. These instruments will now be described.

1.1.1 Attitude Scale and Polarisation Index

Each article is assigned a property, meaning a qualitative characterisation.[9] For Frey's study, articles are coded with one of three possible property values: +1 for a pro-bomb opinion, -1 for an anti-bomb opinion, and 0 for an opinion neutral or unconcerned with the nuclear possession/abstinence dichotomy.

[8] Karsten Frey, *Elite Perception and Biased Strategic Policy Making: The Case of India's Nuclear Build-up* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis: Heidelberg University, 2004) p. 70, available at http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/volltexte/2005/5236/pdf/Frey_Thesis.pdf

[9] Ibid. p. 71.

Given this coding, these articles are then aggregated into an attitude scale, defined as "the mean of the values attributed to the property of a sample of articles".[10] The attitude scale is defined as

$$AS = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{Xi}{n}$$

where
n= number of unit in the sample
Xi=attitude score from each sample unit.

The attitude scale can produce a range of total values from +1 (total pro-bomb consensus) to -1 (total anti-bomb consensus). The value of 0 produced by the scale does not represent a neutral attitude, but, following Frey, "the equilibrium of indetermination among the authors aggregated attitude" within the scale's production of the mean aggregate attitude.[11]
My study will use this tool, but slightly adjust it to help examine research question III: whether the new nuclear capabilities available to India following the 1998 tests are encouraging a reconsideration of India's nuclear posture.

Frey's version of this tool assigned articles with either a +1 (pro-bomb) or -1 (anti-bomb) value. The anti-bomb value constituted arguments against nuclear weapons possession. Our project instead primarily focuses on how Indian strategic discourse is integrating the emerging nuclear force, rather than replicating the possession/disarmament dichotomy that Frey selects for his coding purposes. Nuclear disarmament is but one current of opinion, and as such will be expected to be reflected in opinion spectrums. However, our study intends to identify other potential nuances in opinion in more detail than a blunt arm/disarm choice would provide. For example, what does "arm" constitute in a post-1998 context?

In line with this, our values for using this tool for our study are defined as:

[10] Ibid. p. 71.

[11] Ibid. p. 71.

+1 = Article argues for maximal/unrestricted Indian nuclear force in capability and roles
-1 = Article argues for minimal/restricted Indian nuclear force in capability and roles[12]
0 = Article is neutral or unconcerned with Indian nuclear force capability or roles, but still issues an opinion on general nuclear policy.

A representative example of an argument that would be coded as +1 is:

> *"We need a range of warheads and delivery systems to match all situations and be a convincing deterrent. If an important economic or military target was attacked and our ability to retaliate was restricted to taking out a population centre, our deterrence would not be credible."*[13]

A representative example of an argument that would be coded as -1 is:

> *"India's…will be a minimum credible and defensive deterrence that will involve no nuclear arms race with its neighbours."*[14]

Using this tool will allow us to examine the balance between maximalist (+1) and pro-restraint (-1) opinion regarding the role of India's nuclear force over the course of our study, and to see whether this balance changed over time.

The polarisation index constitutes the standard deviation of the attitude score ($-1 \leq X \leq 1$) of the sample, in order to characterise the average amount by which scores deviate from the mean of the attitude scale of the distribution. The index (PI) is defined as:

$$PI_x = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (Xi - \overline{X})^2}{n-1}}$$

Where

[12] In this coding, disarmament would be grouped under the "-1" category.

[13] Mohan Guruswamy, "Now Work on Real Deterrence", Indian Express, June 5, 1998.

[14] Muchkund Dubey, "Indo-US Talks: The Need for Continuing Dialogue", Times of India, February 15, 1999.

n = number of units in the sample

Xi = attitude score from each sample unit

$\overline{X}$ = sample attitude scale[15]

This tool is used to provide further granularity to our analysis of each nuclear discourse. In particular, it allows us to see how much of a consensus or dissensus there was among commentators on the question of a pro-restraint or maximalist future for the Indian nuclear force. The spectrum of potential results for the polarisation index ranges from 0 (complete consensus among authors on restraint/maximal policies), to 1 or above (extreme polarisation of the debate, with authors arguing for restraint and those arguing for maximal policies equally divided).

1.1.2 Sources and Time-Series Analysis

I incorporate articles expressing an opinion on Indian nuclear policy from six newspapers: *Frontline, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, India Today, Telegraph,* and *Times of India.* As Frey and Malik point out, these newspapers serve India's major metropolitan areas, while their readership demographic coincides with those sectors of the population involved in nuclear discourse and defined as "attentive India" or "informed opinion".[16] Articles merely reproducing government statements, or otherwise refraining from articulating and analysing an opinion on nuclear force issues, are excluded.[17]

For the first timeframe, that of 1997-2000, the newspapers that are analysed include *Frontline, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, India Today,* and *Times of India.* For the remaining two timeframes, that of 2001-2005 and 2005-2009, the *Indian Express* is replaced with the *Telegraph.* This replacement is due to difficulties that arose with accessing *Indian Express* archives in the midst of the study, and rendering this resource no longer available. The *Telegraph* served as a worthy substitute for the remainder of our study, as it holds a very

[15] Frey, *Elite Perception,* p. 72.

[16] Karsten Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb and National Security* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006). p. 34; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*, p. 7.

[17] Frey, *Elite Perception,* p. 63.

similar editorial stance and status as a leading Indian English-language broadsheet newspaper as that of the *Express*.

The newspapers that serve as our subjects of analysis capture the breadth and vibrancy of Indian nuclear discourse.[18] These publications also bring individual granularity to the Indian discourse through their specific traditional outlooks on Indian politics. *Frontline* is a fortnightly magazine with a mainly Marxist perspective on Indian and international politics, and features several regular columnists critical of capitalism, nuclear weapons and perceived American imperialism as a constant threat to the Indian economy and polity. However, its pages are also occasionally offered to contributors defending India's right to develop a full maximalist range of nuclear weapons.

The *Hindustan Times* is a major Indian daily broadsheet newspaper, and India's second-largest English-language newspaper by circulation. During our timeframe, it often adopts a strongly nationalist editorial line in foreign policy. Its foreign policy op-ed columns are also frequently filled by hawkish, pro-BJP defence scholars emphatic of the need for a robust Indian defence posture, including a sophisticated, maximalist nuclear force.

The *Times of India* is India's largest-selling English-language broadsheet newspaper, and largely adopts a centrist editorial approach. While its editorials largely contribute to the political "centre" in our study, it offers a range of opinion articles largely balanced between centrist, hawkish and dovish Indian analysts.

India Today is India's largest-selling English-language news magazine. It offers longer in-depth articles reporting on foreign and defence policy challenges. Its editorials are mainly centrist in approach, but during our timeframe also hosts regular columns by authors affiliated with the centre-left Congress party.

[18] Circulation figures for the following newspapers are derived from Media Research Users Council, *Indian Readership Survey 2012 Q4 Topline Findings*, available at http://www.mruc.net/sites/default/files/IRS%202012%20Q4%20Topline%20Findings.pdf

The *Indian Express* is a daily broadsheet newspaper, holding a similar centrist editorial stance to the *Times of India*. However, commentators supportive of the Congress party frequently populate its foreign policy op-ed pages.

The *Telegraph*, which replaces the *Express* from 2000 onward, joins *Frontline* as the other publication in our selection headquartered outside of New Delhi. *Frontline* is produced from Chennai, and the *Telegraph* from Calcutta. Its editorials are mainly centrist, but its op-ed pages are balanced between hawkish defence analysts, foreign policy commentators supportive of the Congress party, and anti-nuclear voices such as those found in *Frontline*. It is India's fourth-largest selling English-language newspaper.

The above media thus constitutes many of the most influential Indian news publications and most popular by circulation. Their grouping together as our subjects of analysis offers a broad and balanced view of the Indian strategic discourse. Indeed, this grouping well captures its spectrum of opinion on the role and meaning of nuclear weapons for Indian security, as well as its political spectrum as expressed in support for different parliamentary parties.

A methodological point that must be addressed is the likelihood of some communications between government officials and media commentators in the development of each strategic discourse. It is reasonable to expect a certain degree of correspondence between some officials and commentators as the latter consider and issue their policy recommendations as captured in our study. A recent memoir by Sanjaya Baru, Media Advisor to the Prime Minister of the United Progressive Alliance government (2004-2014) outlines the occasional arrangement of official briefings with senior editors and foreign policy commentators.[19] However, this account nevertheless highlights the absolute freedom of Indian editors and commentators to issue their independent views on foreign and security policy issues, and indeed catalogues several examples of newspapers ignoring official outreach or of officials engaging with commentators to see the latter authoring blistering criticisms of Indian policy and recommending that a new direction be adopted.[20]

[19] Sanjaya Baru, *The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh* (New Delhi: Viking, 2014) pp. 32, 136.

[20] Ibid. pp. 99, 180, 204-5, 229.

This study thus notes that officials and participants in strategic discourse are not hermetically sealed from each other, and a degree of communication between some participants and officials may take place in each episode of my study. However, this point does not undermine the hypothesised agenda-setting function of strategic discourse in my study. The editorial independence of the Indian media is not in doubt, as demonstrated by these limits of Indian government influence on the press and by the frequent vituperative criticism of governments seen in our study. Indeed, this reality further reaffirms the hypothesised agenda-setting function of strategic discourse upon policy, in that officials wish to engage with and understand the discourse on each nuclear policy topic. The memoir further notes the regular government analysis of major newspaper commentary and editorials and reporting of these to senior political decisionmakers, who are keen to understand streams of opinion in strategic discourse as they consider their relevant policy decision.[21]

By contrast, this point would become a real methodological concern in the context of a study of the media landscape in Pakistan or China, to give two examples. In these environments, government control and pressure upon the domestic press is extensive and the line between government and media houses is often much more indistinct.[22] For these reasons, my study can proceed to methodologically separate Indian strategic discourse from policy decisions, in reconstructing Indian strategic discourses and then measuring the policy options developed within each discourse against eventual government policy.

Articles from the above newspapers expressing an opinion on Indian nuclear policy are collated by timeframe in a time-series analysis. This is used to measure the arrangement of a series of observations (for example, number of articles observed arguing a particular opinion or concerning a particular nuclear issue) in the sequence of their occurrence at specified successive points in time. Sequential measurements are made by Frey for four irregular time

[21] Ibid. pp. 32, 240. See also Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy 'Software"', Asia Policy No. 8 (July 2009) p. 83.

[22] See, for example, Beina Xu, *Media Censorship in China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2014). Available at http://www.cfr.org/china/media-censorship-china/p11515; and International Media Support, *Between Radicalisation and Democratisation in an Unfolding Conflict: Media in Pakistan* (Copenhagen: International Media Support, 2009). Available at http://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/media-in-pakistan-2009-ims.pdf

intervals (mid-1986 to mid-1991: five years; mid-1991 to mid-1996: five years; mid-1996 to May 1998: two years; and May 1998 to mid-2003; five years).[23]

This entails the division of the study into separate timeframes which can then be individually studied. This division of the discourse into successive timeframes, which are independently and sequentially analysed, creates a more manageable volume of commentary for purposes of analysis. The table below explains the three timeframes of analysis that my study is divided into.

Table 2: Time Intervals for Research Project

Sequence	**Timeframe**	**Interval Period (Years)**	**Developments**
I.	May 1997-Jan 2000	2.5	National elections and National Democratic Alliance administration; Indian nuclear tests and announcement of overt nuclear deterrence; issuance of draft nuclear doctrine; Kargil war
II.	Jan 2001 – end 2004	4	Indian parliament attack and subsequent nuclear standoff with Pakistan; issuance of official Indian nuclear doctrine; establishment of Strategic Forces Command and Nuclear Command Authority; national elections and United Progressive Alliance Administration
III.	2005 – April 2009	4.25	Implementation of US-India civil nuclear agreement; Mumbai terrorist attack.

This division permits a feasible volume of commentary for each timeframe within the confines of a doctoral research project. Articles from the above newspapers have been collected to produce a full population for each timeframe. A random sample has then been drawn from this full population of these articles, and this random sample analysed to produce

[23] Frey, *Elite Perception,* p. 72.

the findings of our study regarding Indian nuclear strategic discourse and the nuclear policy decisions taken within each timeframe.

As we can see above, there is a slight variation in the length of each timeframe (ranging from 2.5 years to 4.25 years). The first period, from 1997-2000, held by far the most voluminous level of commentary on nuclear issues, with nearly seven hundred articles in the full population for this timeframe. This slightly smaller timeframe comparative to others, reflective of the need for a manageable volume of commentary to be analysed, thus still holds a sizeable volume of commentary for purposes of analysis.

The study has otherwise aimed to keep the timeframe lengths as equal as possible. No nuclear decision was taken in the year 2000. This year has thus been omitted from our study, to avoid one timeframe becoming twice the length of others and so improve the relative equality of timeframes.

1.1.3 Sample and Coding Details

This study has selected to extract a random sample from the total population in each timeframe for analysis, rather than using the total population. Extracting a random sample is a common statistical practice in order to guard against any potential coding or selection bias in the total population affecting results. It was therefore essential for this study to develop a random sample for analysis.

However, in selecting the size of the random sample, the reality of the low numbers of articles expressing an opinion on Indian nuclear policy also had to be taken into account. The total population, across all three timeframes in this study, consisted of 1,186 articles. By comparison, other statistical survey topics – for example for medical trials or political polling – can entail a total population amounting to several thousand participants. While it was important to develop a random sample for analysis, the comparatively small size of this total population and accordingly random sample meant that a random sample of the largest possible size would be best for this study. A large random sample would permit the greatest breadth and depth of articles for analysis given the above numerical constraints, while still protecting against any coding or selection bias.

There are three commonly used confidence levels for random samples – meaning the degree of certainty that the mean of the random sample contains the true mean of the total population. These three confidence levels are 90%, 95% and 99%, with a 90% confidence level requiring the smallest random sample and a 99% level requiring the largest.[24] This study selected a 99% confidence level, paired with a standard 5% margin of error. This means that we have 99% confidence that the mean of the random sample is within 5% above or below the true mean of the total population.

The choice of a 99% confidence level therefore produces the largest possible random sample, while still protecting against the concern of coding or selection bias that can arise with studies with no random sample and analysing only the total population. A table summarising the total population and random sample for each timeframe, following these rules, is provided below. These details are also reproduced at the start of each chapter.

Table 3: Total Populations and Random Samples, 1997-2009

Timeframe	**Total Population (Articles)**	**Random Sample (Articles)**
1997-99	675	335
2001-05	189	147
2005-09	322	217

The coding guidelines for articles from the aforementioned Indian newspapers are supplied in section 1.1.1 of this thesis, with some coding examples also provided in the appendix. To ensure that these coding guidelines, process, and results were clearly communicable and easily replicable, a sample of ten articles and the coding guidelines were provided to another scholar to independently code following the guidelines. The scholar's coding results agreed

[24] National Institute of Standards and Technology and SEMATECH, *NIST/SEMATECH e-Handbook of Statistical Methods*, available at http://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/handbook/eda/section3/eda352.htm; Frank H. Osborne, "Confidence Level for a Population Mean", available at http://www.kean.edu/~fosborne/bstat/06amean.html; Custom Insight, LLC. "Survey Random Sample Calculator", available at http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp

with my results, and the scholar further agreed that the guidelines were written sufficiently clearly for replication purposes.[25]

Having established the methodological approach of the thesis, I will now examine in more detail the specific contributions that this study will make to literature on Indian nuclear history, defence policymaking, strategic culture, and discourse analysis.

1.2 Literature Review

This thesis argues that strategic discourse is playing a significant and growing role in defining Indian policies in foreign, security and nuclear policy contexts. As the importance of strategic discourse to policy expands, its study becomes an essential element of understanding Indian policies in these areas. This literature review will explore current approaches to the study of Indian strategic discourse and foreign and defence policymaking, and demonstrate where our study usefully contributes to the analysis of these issues.

At the outset of India's existence as an independent state, policymaking discretion was greatly concentrated in the hands of its founding Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. However, there is a consensus among academics that this has been replaced today with a vibrant external Indian discourse on different prospective strategic futures, and a discourse that is more influential on the policymaking process. The new approach is propelled by interlocking internal and external drivers initiating in the 1990s. These include the end of the Cold War; the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party as a credible alternative Indian ruling party, generating more public debate on political and foreign policy issues; the effects of Indian economic liberalisation in encouraging the growth of a news-consuming middle class interested in international issues; and generational change within government, as Nehru-era leaders depart the scene and are replaced by new leaders.[26] These conditions are ideal for

[25] Replication undertaken by Yogesh Joshi, Doctoral Candidate, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.

[26] Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010) pp. 126-127; C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) pp. xx, 30-49; Bashrat Peer, "India's Broken Promise: How a Would-be Power Hobbles Itself", Foreign Affairs (May/June 2012) pp. 158-159; Harsh V. Pant, "Introduction" in Harsh

Indian strategic discourse to consider and shape Indian policy approaches to the domestic and international context. This supports the drive of this study, to examine how this discourse is taking place and its effect on policymaking.

The rising importance of Indian strategic discourse is also signified by the government's increasing interest in involving external opinion-formers in advisory roles. The Ministry of External Affairs analyses daily op-eds from several Indian newspapers.[27] The National Security Advisory Board was set up in 1998 to involve scholars, journalists, and retired civil and military officials in considering strategic issues.

Contemporary Indian nuclear policy is indeed particularly ripe for a discourse analysis. India is presently debating its nuclear force options. Indian nuclear policy also serves as a topic of increasing domestic and international interest, and studies of Indian nuclear policy integrative of discursive influences, while gradually obtaining more academic interest, populate a still nascent research field. Having demonstrated the relevance of discourse analysis studies to understanding contemporary Indian foreign and security policymaking, I will now look at how our study contributes to the specific literature on Indian nuclear policy.

1.2.1 Nuclear Policymaking

This section will examine the nuclear policymaking process as presented in academic literature. It will argue: that understanding the domestic policy process and its actors is essential to understanding nuclear policy; that discourse has an important role in the policy process; and that any model seeking to explain nuclear policymaking must not be deterministic, and thus incorporate the leadership's ability to choose among different policy options.

How did India become a nuclear weapons state? Academic narratives of Indian nuclearisation generally fall into three theoretical approaches; those from realism, domestic politics, and

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V. Pant (ed.) *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World* (London: Routledge, 2009) p. 10; Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp. 72-73; Malik, *India's Nuclear Debat*e, p. 7; Pant, *Contemporary Debates*, pp. 2-3.

[27] Markey, "'Software"', pp. 82-83.

organisational theory.[28] Realists emphasise international structural pressures, foremost among which featured rising nuclear threats from Pakistan and China, combined with American-led pressure directed through the global nonproliferation regime against Indian nuclear efforts, producing an Indian nuclear "breakout" in 1998 as a predictable defence mechanism against these concerns and additional declaration of great power status.[29]

Domestic politics approaches assert the assessment of external developments and production of responsive policies through domestic political processes, and the simultaneous shaping of these policies by other assumptions and values inherent to domestic culture. In India, nuclear policy became domestically integrated with perceptions of India's requirements for great power status, escaping the spectre of colonial external dependence, and, more directly, an occasional means for partisan popular uplift.[30] Nuclear policy, as well as responding to the external threats identified by the realist account, also became a vehicle for these domestic political imperatives, and cannot be explained without reference to the latter.[31]

"Organisational theory", as a subset of the "domestic politics" perspective, recognises the salience of internal bureaucratic politics in explaining the policy process. In the Indian context, several studies have identified a "strategic enclave" as enjoying great discretion over nuclear policy formulation. Nuclear policy is framed by the institutional interests of this enclave, which here principally consists of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the armed services and supportive strategic commentators.[32]

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[28] Gaurav Kampani, "Stakeholders in the Indian Strategic Missile Program", Nonproliferation Review Vol. 10 Issue 3 (Fall/Winter 2003) p. 49.

[29] Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program", International Security Vol. 23 No. 4 (Spring 1999) pp. 148-177.

[30] Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons*, pp. 291-309; Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p. 178; Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp. 72-75.

[31] Srirupa Roy, "Nuclear Frames: Official Nationalism, the Nuclear Bomb, and the Anti-Nuclear Movement in India" in M.V. Ramana and C.R. Reddy (eds.) *Prisoners of the Nuclear Dream* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2003) pp. 346-347; Abraham, *Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*, p. 7.

[32] Itty Abraham, "India's 'Strategic Enclave': Civilian Scientists and Military Technologies", Armed Forces & Society Vol. 18 No. 2 (Winter 1992); Kampani, "Stakeholders".

While all three perspectives make useful contributions, we must delve further into the policy process to understand nuclear policy outcomes. The realist account, in its emphasis on external causes, has difficulty with this requirement. For example, realist narratives have difficulty explaining the precise timing and form of Indian nuclearisation, as shaped by domestic forces. This advantages the explanatory value of the domestic and organisational approaches to nuclear policymaking.

Following this imperative, the four principal domestic actors in nuclear policymaking – the military, civilian bureaucracies, the political leadership, and strategic commentators – will now be examined in greater detail.

The relative exclusion of the military from nuclear policymaking, and its entry into the process largely at the point of receiving orders from the political leadership and tools from the defence scientific agencies, is key to understanding nuclear policy. While recent reforms have introduced a tight nuclear command chain demarcating levels and lines of civilian and military authority in the use of nuclear force, this has not substantively improved the military's position in the nuclear policy process.

This issue is manifest of the aforementioned Indian institutional distrust of the military. This facet of defence policymaking has been well analysed in the literature, so we will not dwell much further on this topic.[33] This grants the three other main actors in the strategic enclave – civilian bureaucracies, political leadership, and strategic commentators – a more prominent role in nuclear policymaking to fill the gap left by the relative marginalisation of military contributions and analysis.

The role of the civilian bureaucracies is certainly influential, but not total. Focusing on the interests of the defence agencies sheds light on the institutional interests behind key red lines of Indian nuclear policy, but oversimplifies the process itself. The political leadership retains authority (although this may appear ephemeral if not theoretical at present) to bend the

[33] See, for example, Pant, *Contemporary Debates*, pp. 65-91; Cohen and Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming*; Kampani, "Stakeholders"; Kothari, *Managing India's Nuclear Forces*.

civilian defence agencies to their will, and have done so before.[34] The leadership still holds the final word.

This point – the importance of leadership agency – should be further emphasised, and is essential to our study. While domestic and international pressures crowd the leadership decisionmaking process and to an extent restrict and focus policy actions in a certain direction, the leadership always retains a spectrum of policy options from which to choose. In their search for determinant domestic or international forces, all three explanatory approaches underweight the importance of leadership agency.

Any theoretical approach to nuclear policy construction seeking analytical credibility should therefore incorporate the leadership's ability to choose. However, the leadership does not consider and decide nuclear policy without advice, or at the least certain preconceived ideas, about the relationship of nuclear weapons to Indian strategic objectives. This is where the last principal actor, strategic commentators, enters.

Nearly all scholars agree that strategic commentators have a certain role in the policy process. Tellis outlines the real, although limited, influence of strategic commentators on the policy process:

> *"Where the influence of elite and mass opinion on nuclear weapons is concerned, perhaps the most critical fact, then, is that the former group (in its security-related incarnation) dominates the political debate and defines the range of preferred choices but has remarkably little power to force policymakers to act in support of those preferences".*[35]

Control over the spectrum of policy choices is however an essential area of influence. Indeed, this point has been developed in the political science literature on different forms, or "faces"

[34] Dinshaw Mistry, "Diplomacy, Domestic Politics and the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement", Asian Survey Vol. 46 No. 5 (September/October 2006) pp. 678-88.

[35] Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Arsenal*, p. 106.

of power, with the third, and most subtle "face", being control of the policy agenda.[36] I therefore argue that efforts to understand nuclear policymaking must include a deep knowledge of the domestic political and bureaucratic policymaking landscape the process operates within; and that strategic discourse plays a significant and growing role in this landscape.

The influence of strategic discourse requires still greater study, and opens questions regarding the presence and workings of strategic culture. I will now investigate general and India-focused literature on strategic culture, in order to further outline the hypothesis of its agenda-setting role in nuclear policymaking.

1.2.2 Strategic Culture

In a foundational article in the theorising of strategic culture, Johnston offered the following definition:

> *"Strategic culture is an integrated set of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious."*[37]

However, Gray offers a different view. He holds that perception, culture and action are bound up in the irreducible concept of strategy, and are continually interacting in a communication loop. Following this logic, Gray asserts that strategic culture is an "indivisible" aspect of strategy, but he nevertheless still divides strategic culture from the process of strategy and give it a certain individual definitional clarity.[38] This suggests that

[36] Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power", American Political Science Review Vol. 56 No. 4 (1962) pp. 947-952; Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 14-29.

[37] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", p. 46.

[38] Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation Strikes Back", Review of International Studies Vol. 25 Issue 1 (January 1999) p. 59; Colin S. Gray, "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic

strategic culture can indeed be abstracted from strategic processes as a legitimate subject of enquiry.

Are there certain unique characteristics of Indian strategic culture? A landmark effort in this field, which continues to shape and be drawn upon by current literature, is Tanham's *Indian Strategic Thought*. This work aimed to *"distill the enduring themes of Indian strategic policies"* by considering cultural, geographical and historical influences on Indian strategic thinking and security perspectives of Indian elites. Tanham's analysis led him to assert *"the absence of strategic thinking"* and of strategic culture, and that the failure of security discourses to define and pursue specific national interests combined with ingrained habits of reactive, ad-hoc policy formulation and execution. Searching for a political-civilisational base generative of this security perceptual and behavioral superstructure, Tanham settled on a Hindu origin, arguing that its religious view *of "life as an eternal present, with neither history nor future – discourages planning".*[39]

While Tanham's work remains a highly useful guide to Indian strategic history and conduct, his argument for its Hindu origin is unconvincing, as is its underlying driver of a felt need to identify an ancient historical validation for his findings. While some commonalities of Indian security practice with Hindu traditions may be of ancillary interest, the strategic cultural environment socialising policymakers and thinkers is not determined by an unchanging and eternal Hindu essence, but by the norms, values and policy preferences organising security discourse, as produced and reproduced in the contemporary context that these practitioners inhabit.

A second major approach in the field of Indian strategic culture has been that of Bajpai. He argues that Indian strategic culture presently plays host to three main analytical "*streams of thinking"* – Nehruvian, neoliberalism, and hyperrealism – all seeking to provide the next

Culture", Comparative Strategy Vol 26. No. 1 (January 2007) pp. 1-20; Stuart Poore, "What is the Context? A Reply to the Gray-Johnston Debate on Strategic Culture", Review of International Studies Vol. 29 Issue 2 (April 2003) p. 281.

[39] George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1992) pp. iii, 50.

organising paradigm to shape Indian policy.[40] This approach further undermines the Tanham thesis in its evidence of a vibrant Indian strategic culture. However, it significantly does not track potential evolutions within these streams of thinking over time, instead offering readers a snapshot of the Indian strategic debate at the time of writing. We can therefore see room for a substantial study of Indian nuclear strategic culture, and one that analyses potential changes in its preferences, in the strength of various "streams of thinking", and their underlying assumptions over a period of time. This study will proceed in this direction.

How do we conduct this study in terms of analysing and categorising strategic culture? Johnston and Gray both agree upon the sources from which to derive an understanding of the historical resonances, norms, and associated value sets underpinning strategic culture. Johnston defends these units of analysis by arguing that the *"central paradigm"* of a strategic culture issues from *"shared information that comes from deeply historical sources, not from the current environment."*[41]

However, a point that seems to elude both scholars here is that, while a focus on historical artifacts is indeed a useful referent, the artifacts obtain their cultural content and meaning only through continuous social discursive processes. Analysing only historical works but not how these are interpreted, utilised and so given meaning in a contemporary strategic context misses the point.

A useful exploration of strategic culture could therefore provide a contextualisation with use of historical works as background, but primarily focus on these discursive processes to understand their generation and integration of norms, perceptual biases, value sets and argumentation structures. Indeed, I agree with Johnston's definition of the effects of strategic culture, but not of its sources. I instead argue that strategic culture largely manifests itself in the form of strategic discourse by a state security community as applied to specific, individually unique questions concerning the prospective use of force.

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[40] Kanti Bajpai, "Indian Strategic Culture" in Michael R. Chambers (ed.) *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002) pp. 245, 251-90.

[41] Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", pp. 46-50.

I will now look at attempts to explore these effects of strategic discourse as represented in academic literature, to clarify how its functioning and influence can be best encapsulated by a specific theoretical and methodological approach, and where our study specifically contributes to the existing literature on Indian nuclear discourse.

1.2.3 Nuclear Discourse

Nizamani has developed a comparative discourse analysis of India and Pakistan from the period 1947-1999, to suggest how the bomb is introduced, understood, and reinterpreted through strategic discourse, and thus given political meaning(s) in both states. Nizamani posits an influential collective of "nukespeakers", active in politics and the media, who gradually framed an Indian bomb as essential to national security and sought to marginalise opponents to this view.[42] This discursive process eventually generated a consensus in Indian policy circles in favour of the bomb. While Nizamani's focus is on the history of the Indian nuclear programme toward the 1998 tests, his strong emphasis on the importance of discourse analysis and of the great influence of societal opinion formers toward policy construction informs the approach of our study.

Das and Malik both argue that the political meaning of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan are inextricably tied up in broader discourses as to the contested political identity of the state.[43] Das adopts a methodology employing an eclectic range of primary resources, including political party documents, speeches by political leaders, journals, newspapers, magazines and interviews, to attempt to capture the nuclear zeitgeist of specific episodic timeframes in India, namely the Nehru period (1947-62), post-Nehru Congress period (1962-98) and BJP period (1998-2004).

However, by focusing on the political leader determining the weather of strategic culture, Das' approach downplays the potential influences of the selected documentation, as producer of strategic culture, in shaping the policy choices and underlying norms perceived as realistic

[42] Haider K. Nizamani, *The Roots of Rhetoric: Politics of Nuclear Weapons in India and Pakistan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000) pp. 11-16.

[43] Runa Das, "State, Identity and Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities in India and Pakistan", Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol. 45 No. 2 (April 2010) p. 146.

and judicious by the political leaders. Malik usefully diverges from Das at this juncture, by focusing on the debate over the 1990s to postulate how nuclear identity was contested by strategic discourse and new definitions generated, rather than the view of political identity as predominantly shaped by political leaders that Das leans toward.[44]

Frey agrees with Nizamani and Das as to the value of discourse analysis for understanding dominant perceptions of the bomb in the Indian body politic. He offers a refined methodology for reconstructing discourses, involving a random selection of 705 editorial and opinion articles on nuclear policy from five national newspapers to identify principal currents of opinion, norms, values and argumentation patterns.[45]

Frey's proven methodology is most appropriate for understanding strategic discourse, and especially for drawing quantitative conclusions to identify the dominance or marginalisation of values, norms and proposed policies in discourse. From these conclusions, and armed with a knowledge of nuclear policy outcomes, we can then assume a position to answer the question of correlation or dissociation of dominant nuclear policy opinion and policy outcomes.

Can a link from societal opinion to policy outcomes be drawn? Frey goes the furthest in drawing an unambiguous causal link, rooted in the privileged position of opinion leaders in Indian society and policy circles. He argues that "*a limited number of strategic thinkers and opinion leaders referred to as the strategic elite…has managed to monopolize the nuclear discourse, thereby determining India's nuclear course from within the government's advisory bodies.*"[46]

However, several other authors instead prefer to present policy debates as important in some intuitive way to policy, and leave the exact relationship unidentified. By reconstructing the strategic discourse and policy options developed by this discourse, and then examining the correlation of this discourse with the policy eventually selected by government, my study

[44] Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*, pp. 3-12

[45] Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp. 34-46. This work derives from his doctoral dissertation, which contains an expanded explication of this methodology. See Frey, *Elite Perception*, pp. 62-72.

[46] Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, p. 2.

identifies whether strategic discourse and thus strategic culture has an input in the policymaking process.

Two main approaches are at our disposal for studying contemporary Indian strategic culture. One approach, suggested by Johnston, is to identify ancient texts from the formative stages of the community being studied, to deduce their lessons for considering the application of force to a political objective. From this, the analyst then tests the adherence of policymakers and analysts to the perceived policy prescriptions of these artifacts. This lends itself to a slow-moving, if not static, view of strategic culture, as the artifacts and lessons they contain, in this reading, do not and cannot change.

A second approach, which we will employ in our study, is to focus on debates on the policy questions that are the subject of study, to see which combination of values and argumentation structures emerged victorious in providing the policy solution that was then selected. Although this method does not dismiss the importance of historical artifacts, it explicitly recognises that they are subject to processes of interpretation in different debates for different ends. What the artifact means to a society may be different from what its author intended, and it only gains its social meaning in strategic culture through discursive interpretation. This latter approach will be employed toward our focus on Indian discourses on nuclear weapons over the last decade.

As informed by this section's survey of relevant literature, I argue that a small interested elite, publishing opinions regularly in newspapers, serves as the key element of Indian strategic discourse. My hypothesis is that strategic discourse has an input in the policymaking process.

1.3 Argument and Conclusions of Thesis

The findings of this study constitute a unique contribution to literature on Indian nuclear history, defence policymaking, strategic culture, and discourse analysis. The outcomes of this research most directly contest the thesis of Tanham, that India simply has no strategic culture. We instead see that India possesses a nuclear strategic culture, primarily characterised by the organising value of nuclear restraint. However, this organising value is more pronounced in security crisis discourses and is coming under progressively strong

contestation by an alternative organising value of nuclear maximalism in peacetime doctrinal nuclear policy discourses.

In each episode of the study, we see a vibrant debate unfolding on prospective nuclear choices for India, with contributors to the discourse issuing well-informed and strongly argued opinions in support of a range of proposed Indian nuclear policy options.
The government then selected an option that correlated with a policy option from the strategic discourse, answering the first research question of this study. The policy indeed always correlated with the first or second most numerically popular proposed policy option in the discourse, answering the second research question. The study therefore finds that India has a strategic culture; strategic culture is generated by strategic discourse, which receives material and ideational inputs and formulates strategic views on the appropriate use of force based upon these; and strategic culture has an input in the policymaking process.

Given that the government decision always correlated with a policy option from the discourse on that nuclear policy topic, it allows us to further anticipate that a numerically dominant nuclear policy option, with a strong base of centrist support in Indian strategic discourse, will be highly likely to correlate with the ultimate government nuclear policy.

The third research question of the study concerned the role of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as an influence in the strategic discourse, and whether it would serve as a core perceived influence for changing Indian attitudes to the nuclear force over the course of our study. The study demonstrated that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was a recurrent principal influence, forming the third most cited influence across the discourses.

However, it is also important to note that while Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was one of the most prominent influences on India's nuclear discourse, it was not the single most important influence. Above it in the top four most cited influences were Pakistani Pressures and American Pressures; and below it was Domestic Partisan Politics. This suggests that the actions of Islamabad and Washington have great impact on Indian nuclear discourse and policy, as do the parliamentary process and policy stances of Indian political parties.
Given their prominence in our study, these four factors – Pakistani Pressures, American Pressures, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, and Domestic Partisan Politics – are the most influential in shaping perceptions and arguments within Indian nuclear discourse that

then inform its development of policy options among which the government selects. This finding will usefully inform future research on Indian nuclear policy, in isolating the most prominent influences for special attention.

There was a real change in Indian views of the relevance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements over the course of our study, with the early focus on nuclear restraint and a small arsenal limited by several restraint measures giving way to greater support for maximalist arguments for prioritising technical credibility and doctrinal flexibility regarding the nuclear force instead. Even supporters of a US-India civil nuclear agreement were compelled to argue that an agreement would not stand in the way of any future Indian nuclear development plans.

However, it is important to nevertheless read these changes in their specific context of non-crisis episodes, in which contributors to the discourse had the luxury of considering alternative nuclear outlooks in peacetime. The trend of the erosion of nuclear restraint and growing support for maximalism remained largely a non-crisis episode phenomenon, and was far less pronounced in crisis episodes where potential war loomed. The pro-restraint consensus of the 1999 doctrine largely persisted in the three crisis episodes – the 1999 Kargil War, 2001-2 Parliament Attacks crisis, and 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks crisis – as contributors to these discourses advocated nuclear restraint either universally or in large majorities. Faced with the prospect of war, the growing peacetime support for maximalist thinking encouraging of a greater role for the nuclear force in Indian defence largely dissipated, and analysts returned to a view of the nuclear force as a last-resort measure and unuseable in any other context.

The growing support for maximalist nuclear policy thinking and assigning the nuclear force a greater role in Indian defence in non-crisis episodes therefore largely vanished when India was confronted with a major attack or military contingency. This highlights that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements played a role in reshaping Indian perceptions of its nuclear options over the course of our study; but that these transitions were largely confined to non-crisis episodes.

This notable difference between crisis and non-crisis episodes has important implications for India's nuclear future. A central lesson for Indian nuclear policy flowing from this study is

for contributors to the strategic discourse and policymakers to recognise their tendency to recommend a greater role for nuclear weapons in Indian defence in peacetime, and to fully realise the real dangers of nuclear weapons only in the midst of security crises. The view of nuclear weapons that dominates in crises should be the one that is remembered and informs Indian nuclear discourse and thus policy in peacetime. This will avoid waste in building multiple expansive nuclear platforms planned and developed in peacetime; a small force, intended and developed specifically only as a last-resort option if India is facing political and territorial extinction, will be better tailored toward the most likely use of the Indian nuclear force, as has been demonstrated in the security crises throughout our study. It will also more closely reflect the organising principle of nuclear restraint that is the overall characteristic element of Indian nuclear strategic culture.

1.4 Chapter Summaries

The first chapter, on the question of a shift toward overt nuclear deterrence in 1997-8, found that the government policy correlated with the most popular policy option from the surrounding strategic discourse: that all measures be taken to initiate a new Indian nuclear policy of overt nuclear deterrence. The norm of restraint was also found to be a dominant characteristic of the strategic discourse. This was illustrated by the average attitude score of -0.18, slightly leaning toward restraint on the opinion spectrum. Articles arguing for tests frequently sought to condition their point by framing it as part of a longstanding Indian tradition of nuclear restraint, postulating a future minimal nuclear arsenal, no-first-use, and other restraint measures. This suggests restraint and the need for India to demonstrate restraint as a principal conceptual underpinning of the Indian nuclear discourse.

The influences on Indian nuclear policy in this episode were mostly external in nature. Pressures on India emanating from Pakistan, the United States, China, and the emerging CTBT/FMCT regimes served as the top four influences cited in this discourse on overt nuclear deterrence. This created a sense of Indian nuclear policy as having to navigate a context set for it by powerful external forces. This perception of external pressure undermined Indian confidence in the validity of its existing nuclear policy of opacity, creating momentum toward a change in policy.

The second episode, on the question of whether to develop a new nuclear doctrine in the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests, again demonstrated a correlation of the policy decision and strategic discourse. The government response to this question most closely resembled the second most popular policy option in the discourse, and the option with the broadest and most centrist political support: to develop a full nuclear doctrine incorporating declaratory measures of nuclear restraint, including a declaration of no-first-use. The norm of restraint continued to characterise the discourse concerning this new policy question. Indeed, this became even more pronounced following the tests, with the average attitude score of the discourse on the restraint/maximal nuclear policy spectrum now located further toward the restraint pole.

The perceived security benefits that the tests engendered were reflected in shifts toward domestic influences, especially that of Nuclear Doctrine and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, attaining greater interest in the discourse on a prospective new nuclear doctrine.

The next episode, on the Kargil war, concerned the role of nuclear weapons in India's first war fought under the new overt deterrence policy. This represented a real trial of Indian nuclear restraint under these tense circumstances. However, the response from the discourse, and the official responses selected by the government, demonstrated to the strongest possible degree the influence of nuclear restraint in shaping Indian perceptions of the role of its nuclear force. Every article held a -1 attitude score, producing an overall attitude score at the absolute pro-restraint pole.

Indeed, the policy options developed by the discourse demonstrated an overriding concern with the prospect of escalation of the war to the nuclear level. The majority policy option, which correlated with the government policy, was indeed for India to evict the intruders with the lowest possible level of conventional forces. Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was cited again as a major issue here. However, it was now framed primarily as a complicating additional danger in the war, in introducing the risk of nuclear escalation. India's response to this test of its emerging minimalist nuclear declaratory policy illustrated that nuclear restraint was demonstrably a real organising value for Indian policy in times of war as well as peace.

The next 2001-2 Parliament attacks episode, however, represented a much more dramatic

attack in the nation's capital upon the heart of Indian government. In debating possible responses to this strike, the norm of nuclear restraint did continue as a visible organising value in the discourse, with an average attitude score of -0.77. However, this particular score for this conflict highlighted that there was notably less support for restraint, and a new appetite for maximalist nuclear measures, that had not been present in the Kargil episode.

This tendency was further demonstrated in the specific policy options developed in this discourse. While none recommended use of nuclear weapons, two of the three options now represented overtly escalatory measures, which would deliberately move both India and Pakistan up the escalation ladder in a nuclear environment. The most popular policy option, which correlated with the eventual government policy, was a multifaceted politico-military approach of diplomatically and economically isolating Pakistan. This would be combined with raising military pressure upon Islamabad, although without direct strikes.

The correlation of the most popular policy option with government policy continued the trend in our study thus far, of the first or second most popular policy option with the strongest centrist base of support in the discourse correlating with government policy. The fact that this option, which advocated such an unambiguously escalatory approach, was the centrist choice demonstrated this rise in nuclear hawkishness compared to the Kargil debates.

The influence of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in this crisis episode demonstrated notable departures from that in the previous Kargil crisis. There was a visible decline in concern that the nuclear forces of India and Pakistan meant that any Indian conventional escalation could lead to nuclear war. While a majority of opinion still held the view that nuclear weapons rendered any Indian conventional strike too dangerous, this was no longer a universal opinion as in the Kargil discourse, and was now being contested by an alternate hawkish perception that room existed on the escalation ladder for India to strike and that its nuclear force would deter Pakistan from a commensurate response. While nuclear restraint still remained a prominent norm in characterising debates on Indian nuclear policy, its influence was substantially reduced here. The evolution of India's nuclear discourse and policy now featured a new willingness to use escalatory force that had not existed previously.

The 2001-3 episode on a prospective new nuclear doctrine formed another important nuclear juncture for India. There had been a visible erosion of support for pro-restraint policies in the

Parliament attacks discourse, which was now again demonstrated here. The strong majorities in favour of pro-restraint policies at the outset of our study were now being replaced by a more contested debate, balanced between pro-restraint and pro-maximal arguments. This discourse recorded an overall pro-maximal attitude score of 0.18. This was the first pro-maximal score in our study so far, highlighting the depth of frustration within the discourse at India's security predicament and desire for measures to reassert Indian nuclear deterrence even at the cost of some of its previous restraint commitments.

The most popular policy option, for a new public nuclear doctrine that clarified India's command and control structure but did not make radical changes to the 1999 draft, again correlated with the eventual government policy. This option had enjoyed the strongest centrist support of all in this discourse, highlighting the tendency of policy options correlating with government policy to be the first or second most numerically popular in the discourse and also possess a robust centrist base of support. The new doctrine, issued in January 2003, retained the no-first-use policy and guiding principle of credible minimum deterrence, while outlining a command-and-control structure that assigned clear roles to the civilian leadership and military users.

The top four influences in this discourse – Nuclear Doctrine, Pakistan Pressures, American Pressures, and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements – encapsulated the four main themes of this episode. These revolved around the sufficiency of the 1999 doctrine for India's nuclear policy; the irresponsible provocations of Pakistan and the ability of India's current nuclear doctrine to restore deterrence against it; the transitions in American nuclear strategy and the consequences of these for India's nuclear planning; and the progress and management of the Indian nuclear force and whether a revised doctrine might enhance these.

Of these top four most cited influences in this discourse, two were external and one (Nuclear Force Technical Advancements) been primarily cited in previous episodes by pro-maximalist arguments. This reflects the overall pro-maximalist attitude score of this discourse, and again underlines the continuing erosion of support for nuclear restraint following the Kargil episode.

The next episode, concerning a prospective civil nuclear agreement with the United States, constituted a major landmark in India's nuclear history. Many members of the discourse,

including both supporters and opponents of an agreement, visibly believed that the future course of Indian foreign and security policy greatly hinged on the decision it took on this issue. The drift of Indian nuclear discourse away from the overwhelming consensus in favour of nuclear restraint at the outset of our study, toward a rough balancing of pro-restraint and pro-maximalist opinions on Indian nuclear force preferences, entered a new stage here. The overall attitude score for this discourse was 0.07, the second most pro-maximalist score recorded yet, but also the closest score to the absolute centre of 0 on the restraint/maximalist spectrum. This highlighted the extent of growing dissensus on the future of the nuclear force that was becoming a new fixture of the discourse following the 2001-2 Parliament bombing episode.

Supporters of a nuclear agreement managed to virtually all unite into one cohesive policy option, with a common core of arguments. This option, which also included nearly all the centrist support in the discourse, supported the implementation of a nuclear agreement that would lift economic and technological sanctions upon India, place Indian civilian nuclear facilities under safeguards, and protect India's ability to continue nuclear force development. This policy option alone commanded the support of 58% of the discourse, including most of its centrist support. These two attributes – a status as the first or second most popular policy option, and with a robust base of centrist support – had marked the most likely policy option to correlate with the eventual government decision in each discourse, a pattern which continued in this discourse. While the government pathway in adopting this option was fraught with political difficulties, its eventual decision to implement a nuclear agreement and the shape the agreement took most closely resembled this policy option.

Of the top four most cited influences in this discourse, the most popular – American Influences – was external and one of the domestic influences, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, had been primarily cited in previous studies by pro-maximalist arguments. The other two influences, Economic and Development Needs and Domestic Partisan Politics, were domestic in nature and had traditionally been cited in support of pro-restraint arguments. This reflects the overall centrist attitude score of this discourse, and again underlines the replacement of strong pro-restraint majorities of opinion leading up to the 2001-2 Parliament bombing episode with a rough balancing between pro-restraint and pro-maximal supporters afterward.

The last episode in our study, the 2008-9 Mumbai attacks crisis, posed a key question for the direction of Indian nuclear thought and policy. The Parliament attacks crisis had led to the largest shift of nuclear strategic discourse in our study, including the start of a progressive erosion of the pre-existing pro-restraint consensus, and a new appetite for conventional military strikes upon Pakistan regardless of the escalation risks in their nuclear rivalry. Would the next crisis episode accelerate the direction of movement away from the pro-restraint pole of the spectrum, to the extent that the attitude score would be firmly in the maximalist end of the opinion spectrum?

This crisis instead brought a different outcome: a return to the pro-restraint consensus, reflected by an attitude score of -1, of the Kargil discourse. The overall sense in the Kargil war that Indian nuclear weapons were useable only as a last resort, which had eroded in the Parliament attacks discourse, was therefore restored in this episode.

However, the policy options offered in this Mumbai attacks discourse bore some similarities with that of the Parliament attacks. Where the policy options of the Kargil discourse had focused entirely upon defensive, limited eviction of Pakistani forces back across the border, this episode and that of the Parliament attacks evidenced a desire for Indian conventional military action within Pakistan. Indeed, this episode now found a military strikes option rising to the position of joint first most popular. While therefore this episode could hold a -1 attitude score due to the consensus of its contributors that India should not use nuclear weapons in any circumstance, it still evidenced some of the escalatory appetite of the Parliament attacks discourse; a path that could lead to major war and even nuclear conflict if followed.

The joint second most popular policy option in the discourse, to apply diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan and launch Indian internal security reforms, correlated with the government policy decision. In selecting again one of either the first or second most popular options in the discourse, this outcome again confirms the hypothesis of our study: that the government policy selected would exist on the spectrum of policy options developed by Indian strategic discourse in response to the nuclear policy dilemma. Indeed, in each episode of our study, the government policy resembled either the first or second most popular policy option in the discourse, with a strong base of centrist support.

While Nuclear Force Technical Advancements had been cited in the past largely in support of pro-maximalist arguments, it here instead demonstrated the substantial support for nuclear restraint in this episode. A pro-restraint perception of the fundamental military unusability of the bomb suddenly reappeared in force here. This highlights that nuclear restraint had a greater underlying resilience as an organisational value in Indian strategic discourse, despite its growing contestation by the maximalist organising value until this episode.

With this conclusion of our introduction, we will now proceed to analyse our first episode of strategic discourse, beginning from May 1997. This discourse focused on whether to continue the Indian nuclear policy of "opacity" or adopt a new approach; and if a new approach was needed, which one.

Chapter 2: Decision: 1997-8 Shift to Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests

2.1 Background

The period analysed in this chapter was only the latest stage in India's complex and storied nuclear history. A 1948 Indian Atomic Energy Act established an Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), restructuring hitherto disparate individual projects into a single, centralised state nuclear programme. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was further established in 1954 as an implementation agency, under the direction of the AEC and reporting only to the Prime Minister.

Indian policymakers, analysts and scientists were always aware of the dual purposes of nuclear science, and indeed the chronology of nuclear energy as a successor programme to that of nuclear weapons in the United States. In parliamentary debates concerning the prospective Atomic Energy Commission in 1948, Nehru admitted his inability to structurally disaggregate civil nuclear advances from possible military ends.[47] Nehru also added a handwritten comment to a memo submitted by Bhabha in 1964 regarding a nuclear agreement with Canada, noting that the nuclear energy network contained a *"built-in advantage of defence use if the need should arise"*.[48]

Indian public interest in nuclear armaments increased during the early 1960s. This was most prominently influenced by the shock of the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and subsequent Chinese nuclear test in 1964, and the determination of societal and official pro-bomb lobbies to present an Indian nuclear deterrent as the answer to the following domestic crisis of confidence. After the Chinese test, Indian editorials and opinion articles, previously quiet on nuclear affairs, began to focus in greater numbers on the question of an Indian bomb.[49]

[47] Abraham, *Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb*, p. 48.

[48] Bhumitra Chakma, "Towards Pokhran II: Explaining India's Nuclearisation Process", Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 39 No. 1 (February 2005) p. 195.

[49] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp. 66-67.

Homi Bhabha, head of the Atomic Energy Commission, sought to encourage Indian movement toward a nuclear weapons programme, in part due to the elevated bureaucratic privileges this would bring for his agency. Providing figures to buttress his case, he costed 50 Indian atomic bombs at less than Rs. 10 crores ($21m).[50] A nuclear weapons program now seemed an inexpensive and quickly deliverable security panacea. Bhabha's interventions energised the Indian nuclear discourse, and especially the pro-bomb camp.

Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri announced a compromise in Parliament on November 27, 1964, after substantial pressure from the Congress and Jana Sangh parties toward some form of military nuclear preparation. Having defeated a motion from the Jana Sangh party to authorise an overt nuclear weapons programme, Shastri then detailed that state nuclear research would now be extended to *"peaceful nuclear explosives"*.[51]

In the early 1970s, significant public support existed for Indian nuclear weapons, shaped by continuing China fears, pervasive perceptions of economic and general national underperformance, and opposition to the hardening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty system.[52] In a poll of the urban regions of New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, 69% declared their support for an Indian bomb.[53] Prime Minister Indira Gandhi intended to reap immediate political gains from a nuclear test, which would serve as *"a marking of standing and power for a nation with great aspirations suffering diminished respect"*.[54]

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[50] Ibid. p. 67.

[51] Bhumitra Chakma, *Strategic Dynamics and Nuclear Weapons Research in South Asia: A Historical Analysis* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2004) p. 71.

[52] The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was agreed in 1968, entering into force in 1970. The treaty divides signatories into legitimate nuclear weapons states, defined as those detonating nuclear explosives before 1 January 1967 (United States, United Soviet Socialist Republics/Russia post-1991, United Kingdom, France and China), and non-nuclear weapons states, the latter committing to abstain from nuclear weapons development or possession. Although India energetically participated in treaty negotiations, it has abstained from signing the treaty, mainly as its membership would entail renouncing nuclear weapons. International Atomic Energy Agency, *Information Circular. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (INFCIRC/140)* (Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency, 22 April 1970); Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, p. 291.

[53] Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, pp. 291, 306-309.

[54] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb,* p. 178.

The commissioning of a test series in 1974 was met with an initially exuberant public response. The favourability ratings of Indira Gandhi escalated, and AEC leaders such as Raja Ramanna and Homi Sethna were feted. Societal support was however not universal, with some media sources and politicians questioning the value of the test and its potential effect in starting India down the road of a nuclear arms race. [55]

However, the tests were not preceded or followed by an official strategic review to situate an Indian nuclear force within its broader strategic objectives. The DAE was permitted to continue weaponisation research, developing its first warhead around 1986. However, India's overall nuclear policy became one of "opacity" – neither denying nor confirming its nuclear weapons possession, while neither openly deploying nuclear forces nor taking measures to disarm its nuclear force options.

The debate from this period onward largely focused upon the merits or costs of open deployment of nuclear forces. Growing concern among strategic analysts at reported developments in Pakistan's nuclear programme, with Chinese assistance, generated societal pressure for a more overt and robust Indian nuclear posture. The nuclear question was further elevated in Indian strategic discourse by the Brasstacks crisis of 1986, in which a massive Indian military exercise generated a Pakistani counter-mobilisation, threatening open war with potential nuclear implications.[56]

The 1990s brought additional external pressures to bear on Indian nuclear discourse. The Clinton administration prioritised expanding and strengthening the Nonproliferation Treaty-based global nonproliferation regime. Washington advanced initiatives often at odds with India's refusal to sign nuclear treaties absent a time-bound disarmament commitment, alongside its preference to retain a nuclear weapons option. The goodwill that saw India's joining with the United States to pass a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty resolution in the UN General Assembly in December 1993 did not last, as subsequent treaty drafts permitted exemptions in the forms of subcritical nuclear testing and full testing allowed in extraordinary circumstances. The eventual treaty also omitted reference to time-bound disarmament. The Indian official perception that the treaty aimed to perpetuate the nuclear

[55] Ibid. pp. 179-180.

[56] Frey, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, pp. 37-38.

technological advantages of the five legitimate nuclear weapons states under the NPT hardened, and India opposed the treaty at its final vote in the UN General Assembly in September 1996. This perspective was further validated by the 1995 NPT conference, which saw the treaty indefinitely extended without specific time-bound disarmament measures.[57]

The looming entry-into-force of the CTBT threatened to entrench a global norm against nuclear tests, and thus raise the political costs if India were to do so, even without India's acquiescence to the treaty. A decision by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1995 to commission a new round of tests was intercepted by American intelligence, and Rao yielded to the following tremendous American diplomatic pressure to cancel the testing round. Simultaneously, Chinese nuclear assistance to Pakistan continued, with Pakistan's missile development in particular beginning to overtake that of India in technical capability. A sense of growing external pressure intending to India's strategic flexibility, and ultimately its foreign policy independence, thus pervaded strategic discourse in the time period leading up to the start of our study in 1997.

2.2 Introduction

The timeframe studied here witnessed several momentous changes in Indian nuclear policy. These were unprecedented in the degree of their shifts from previous policy, as well as their relatively rapid sequencing following years of well-spaced reiterations of the status quo. As one of its first decisions upon assuming office in March 1998, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance government commissioned a series of five nuclear tests, to be complemented by declaratory announcements that India was now an overt nuclear weapons state. The previous approach of nuclear opacity, involving neither overtly actualising nor renouncing India's nuclear weapons option, was ostentatiously discarded.

The tests, taking place in May 1998, were a geostrategic shock externally and within Indian domestic discourse. While strategic analysts around the world sought to understand the underlying rationale for the tests and the consequences of a nuclear India for global politics,

[57] Harsh V. Pant, "India and Nuclear Arms Control: A Study of the CTBT", Comparative Strategy Vol. 21 Issue 2 (2002) p. 96.

the exercise opened additional questions for domestic analysts, ranging from the meaning of the tests for the Indian political identity; the wisdom of abandoning the previous policy of opacity; the norms to guide subsequent Indian nuclear policy; and the best means to improve relations with the United States, China and Pakistan following the tests, albeit without undermining the foreign policy independence they were intended to express.

As these debates were launched in the wake of the tests, the Indian government faced several crucial near-term decisions to clarify the subsequent direction of nuclear policy. What aims, norms and values would nuclear policy serve? Would there be any limits, through unilateral or international mechanisms, to the size and capability of the nuclear force? What targets would the bombs be pointed at? As substantial external pressure was placed on India to roll back its military nuclear efforts, what red lines on its nuclear independence would be adopted?

This chapter will analyse the strategic discourse prior to the May 1998 tests and shift of Indian nuclear policy toward overt nuclear deterrence. The chapter will first investigate the nuclear discourse on this policy question over this timeframe to understand the balance of articles emphasising nuclear restraint and a highly limited political and military role for the nuclear force, versus those advocating a maximal nuclear posture with a broad range of political and military roles. The chapter will then delve in greater detail to analyse the positions and recommendations of the discourse on the policy question outlined above. The decisional analysis will include an examination of the number of articles arguing for and against the eventual decision taken; the average position of the articles on the restraint/maximal policy opinion spectrum; the polarisation of the discourse in terms of leaning toward consensus or dissensus; the specific range of policy options outlined in the discourse; and the relative salience of various influences on the policy question in the discourse.

From this analysis, we will be able to generate results toward answering the main research question of this study, concerning the degree to which strategic discourse frames available policy options for leaders, based upon the regularity by which the eventual policy selected correlated with one recommended in strategic discourse. Results will also be generated for the two additional research questions, regarding: the degree to which the policy selected correlates to the most popular option promoted in strategic discourse; and whether a rising

salience of nuclear force technical developments as an influence on nuclear discourse occurs, and, if so, how this affects strategic thought on Indian nuclear policy.

2.3 Analysing the Decision

India conducted five nuclear tests at the Pokhran test site on May 11 and 13, 1998. The test devices encompassed a wide spread of yields, ranging from a 45 kiloton thermonuclear device to a 0.5 kiloton low-yield fission device. Following the test series, the Indian government proclaimed their success and meaning for India's global role: in its opinion, India had now objectively obtained the prestigious status of a *"nuclear weapon state"*, an acclamation that *"was India's due, the right of one-sixth of human-kind"*.[58] The previous official policy of opacity in declaratory and operational nuclear policy, neither verbally nor operationally confirming arsenal possession nor initiating policies that could lead to near-term removal of arsenal development as an option, was henceforth to be discarded, and be replaced with a new assertiveness in openly developing a nuclear arsenal as part of India's subsequent strategy.

Table 4: "Shakti" ("Power") Nuclear Testing Round, May 1998 [59]

Date	**Identifier**	**Description**
May 11, 1998	Shakti I	Two-stage thermonuclear device with fusion boosted primary; 45kt yield
May 11, 1998	Shakti II	Lightweight pure fission device; 12kt yield
May 11, 1998	Shakti III	Experimental pure fission device; 0.3kt yield
May 13, 1998	Shakti IV	Experimental device; 0.5kt yield
May 13, 1998	Shakti V	Experimental device; 0.2kt yield

[58] "Suo Moto Statement by Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament, 27 May, 1998", available at http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/issues/policy/indian-nuclear-policy/suo-motu-statement-pm.html

[59] "India's Nuclear Weapons Program: Operation Shakti, 1998", available at http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/India/IndiaShakti.html

This came as a dramatic development both to international and domestic audiences. There had been hints that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition government, only elected two months before in March 1998, would revise Indian nuclear policy. Its 1998 manifesto repeated the same nuclear language from its 1996 policy slate, committing a BJP government to "re-evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons".[60] However, this vague language allowed room for a wide range of policy options other than tests, as we will see in the policy options promoted in discourse below.

The policy decision followed a wide-ranging debate in Indian strategic discourse on the merits of the existing nuclear policy and the various pressures, including those posed by major states, nonproliferation regime movements, and domestic political and economic imperatives, on Indian strategic policy. Pressures identified as of particular salience in the discourse surrounding a prospective new testing round were the activities of Pakistan, China, and the United States, and the new Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty regimes taking form. The positions of these issues as the top four influences on Indian nuclear policy within discourse highlight the outward-facing nature of the debate, and a tendency for Indian nuclear policy to be framed and justified primarily as a reaction to movements by external actors, rather than as a domestic decision following domestic political imperatives.

The decision was taken and conducted in great secrecy, with only a few senior policymakers part of the decisionmaking process. However, the decision and the values, norms and perceptions shaping it were not developed in a vacuum. This section will now examine in detail the strategic discourse on the question of a new testing round prior to the decision, and illustrate whether the decision mapped to the strategic discourse on the topic.

This analysis will provide empirical data toward the overall research questions of the study, concerning the prospective role of strategic discourse as having an input into the policymaking process; the prospective correlation of the most popular option in strategic discourse with the eventual policy; and the salience of nuclear force technical developments

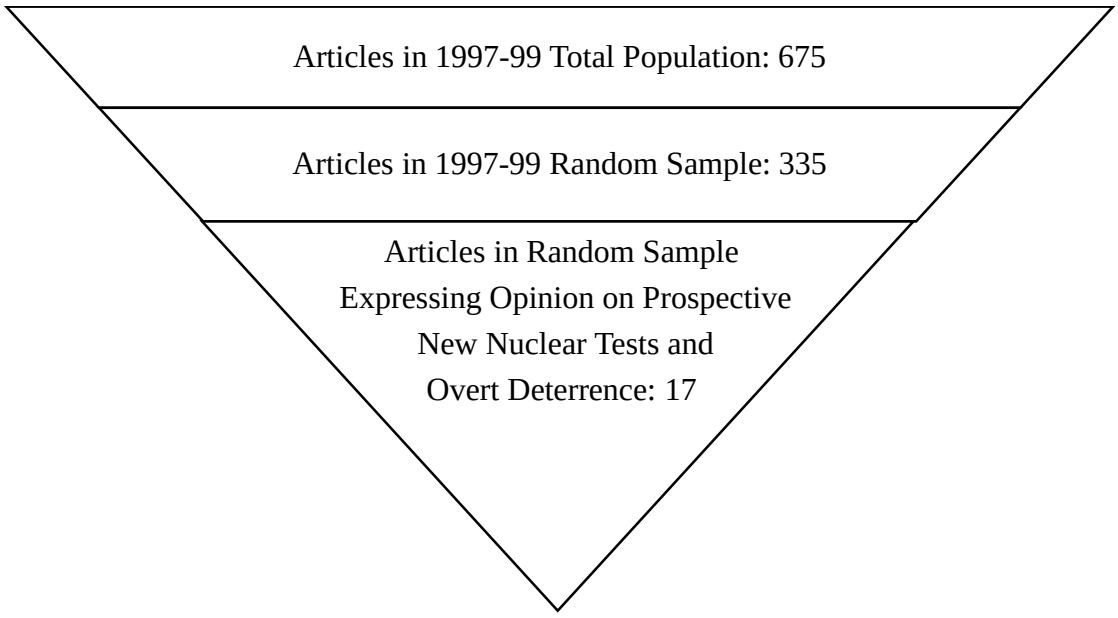
[60] Chapter 8, "Our Nation's Security", *BJP Manifesto 1998*, available at http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=406:national-democratic-alliance-manifesto-1999&catid=50:election-manifestos&Itemid=446

as an explanatory factor for shifting perceptions in discourse over time and as balanced against other explanatory issues.

2.4 Balance of Opinion in Strategic Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Testing Round

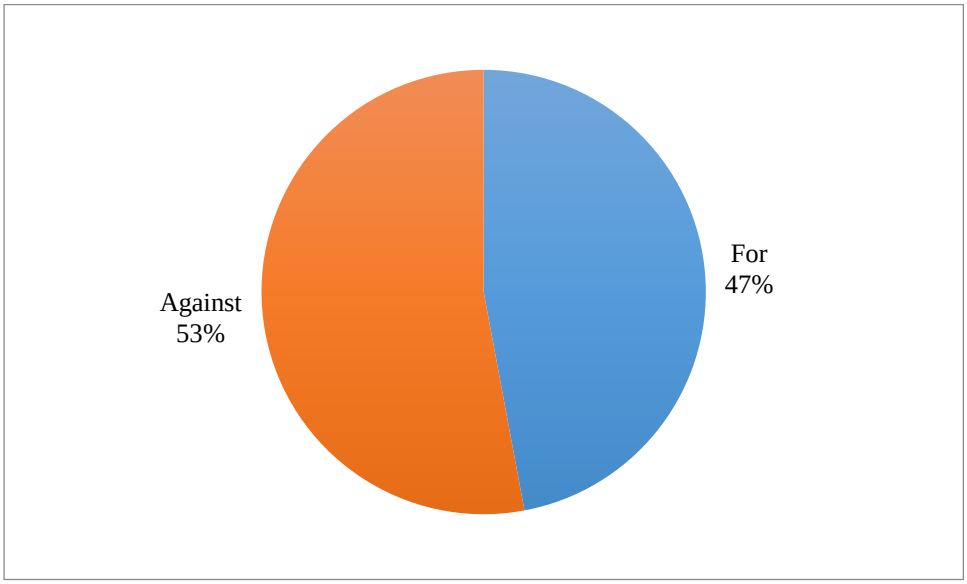
Of the 335 articles in the random sample of strategic discourse on nuclear policy, seventeen expressed an opinion on the question of a new testing round. A graph below depicts the number of articles in the total population of articles in this 1997-99 timeframe expressing an opinion on nuclear policy; the number of the articles in the random sample derived from this total population; and, of this random sample, the number of articles expressing an opinion on this policy question.

Figure 1: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests



There was a narrow majority against a new testing round, as summarised in the graph below.

Figure 2: Balance of Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests



This narrow majority signals the stark divisions in the debate on the question of a new testing round, as will will later see. It also signifies the selection by the government of a policy option that did not enjoy majority support in the discourse, albeit one still strongly supported.

2.5 Attitude Score and Polarisation of Debate

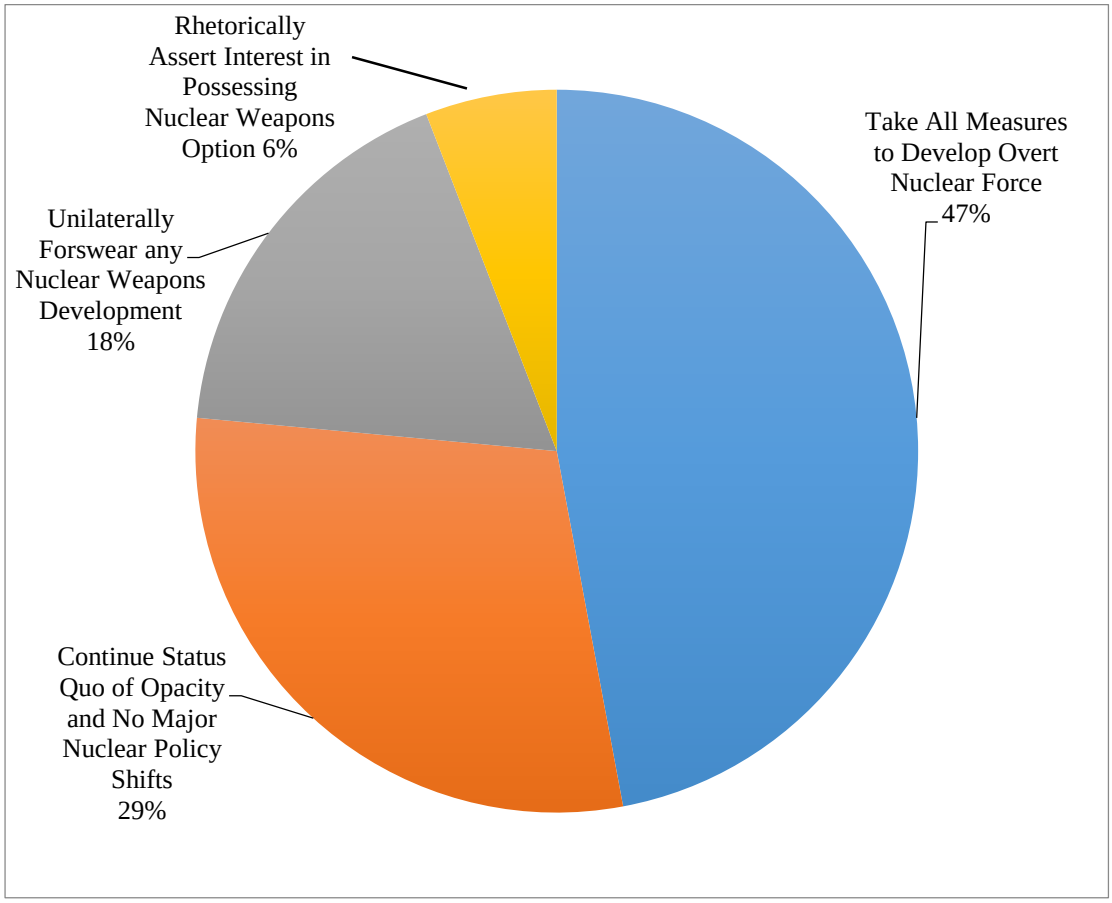
The attitude score of articles expressing an opinion on a new testing round was **-0.18.** With -1 as the absolute pro-restraint pole and 1 as the maximalist pole of opinion, this score signals a slight leaning toward support for restraint in the discourse on this question. The polarisation index for articles expressing an opinion on a new testing round was **0.85**. This is situated on a spectrum of potential values from 0, signifying complete consensus, and 1 or above, signifying extreme polarisation of opinion. The leaning of the index for this question toward polarisation illustrates the divided debate on this policy question.

We will now turn to the specific policy options promoted in this divided debate, which will give a more textured perspective of the breadth of the debate and the internal divisions among articles arguing an overall opinion for and against a new testing round.

2.6 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

While there was a majority of arguments against a new testing round, their proposed policies were not uniform, and in parts contradictory. This divergence contrasts with the arguments in favour of a new testing round, which demonstrate more uniformity and thus a clearer voice to policymakers. Viewing the articles in more detail by their specific policy options promoted, rather than their overall balance in terms of pro-test and anti-test stances, renders clear the diversity of internal opinion on the anti-test side as opposed to the pro-test side.

Figure 3: Policy Options Promoted in Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests



Indeed, if we categorise the articles by their policy options as above rather than their pro-test or anti-test stances, the slender majority of articles in the anti-test column appears to vanish. Certain options within the anti-test framework are also contradictory, most prominently the 18% of articles in favour of India's unilateral removal of its nuclear weapons option contrasting with the 6% arguing that India rhetorically announce its interest in possessing the same nuclear weapons option.

In comparison, the pro-test arguments suffered no such internal divisions, all arguing simply for India to take all measures to develop an overt nuclear force. This amplifies their representation in the discourse, as illustrated above. We will now look in more detail at each option promoted.

Option 1: Take All Measures to Develop Overt Nuclear Force (47%)

These articles argued for an end to the previous Indian nuclear policy of opacity and for the inauguration of a new approach involving new nuclear tests and the articulation, verbally and operationally, of an overt nuclear force. A sense of substantial pressure on India by external factors, most prominently activities by Pakistan, China, the United States and related to the nascent CTBT/FMCT nonproliferation regimes, was emphasised in these arguments. A typical construction of this argument, citing failure of the previous policy approach to counteract escalating external threats, is below:

> *"The recent launch of the Pakistani surface to surface missile with a reported range of 800kms along with the news of Chinese missiles targeted on India appears to have caught the defence establishment in this country on a wrong-foot…The days of nuclear ambivalence, of keeping our nuclear options open seem now to be over. The time has come to develop nuclear weapons overtly...there is no reason why we should not proceed with our own tests in order to have nuclear weapons in place."*[61]

These arguments dismissed the value of opacity as something that had been tried in the past and had demonstrably failed, and demanded a show of nuclear strength and subsequent

[61] Narendra Gupta, "India's Days of Nuclear Ambivalence are Over", Times of India, July 18, 1997.

greater articulation of India's nuclear capabilities in its diplomacy to command regional and global respect. Also, the ability of India to credibly advance such a new nuclear policy in the absence of a new testing round was critiqued:

> *"A reliable minimal deterrent however, cannot emerge without a limited series of nuclear tests."*[62]

The coherence and internal consistency of these arguments, their proposals and reasoning therefore provides a clear diagnosis of the policy problem and corrective policy measures to be taken. This stands in contrast to the various policy options advanced under an "anti-test" rubric.

The commentators making these arguments consisted of retired military officials, hawkish defence journalists and editors, and a defence scholar close to the BJP. However, this group also included a retired Congress foreign secretary. This camp can therefore be summarised as authors arguing for a robust Indian defence policy and for the most part supportive of the new BJP government. Indeed, one article highlighted the traditional association of the BJP with assertive foreign and security policies:

> *"Coalition-leader BJP has been the most vocal of India's political formations on the issue of the nation's security against nuclear-armed opponents...Hopefully the long wait of the armed forces and the country for a strategic deterrent will soon be over."*[63]

Option 2: Continue Status Quo of Opacity and No Major Nuclear Policy Shifts (29%)

Articles making this argument were characterised by comparative caution, and emphasised the risks that abandoning India's existing nuclear policy could make the current situation worse. The regional pressures facing India were depicted as ultimately manageable without India's overt nuclearisation, although movements in this direction would undermine Indian security:

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[62] Brahma Chellaney, "Nuclear Option: The Unresolved Issue", Times of India, August 8, 1997.

[63] Manoj Joshi, "Deadly Option", India Today, May 4, 1998.

"Any overt expression of nuclearisation on India's part could drive Pakistan and China even closer militarily...Smaller South Asian nations may demand a 'nuclear umbrella' from the West if 'Big Brother India' openly goes nuclear. An Indian bomb would make them see India as an expansionist, hegemonist power...If they find themselves wedged between two nuclear powers - India and China - the countries of Southeast Asia would once again rush into Washington's arms."[64]

This perspective is notable in that it shares the same major influences on Indian nuclear policy – the activities of Pakistan, China and the United States – but compared to the pro-bomb arguments, it downplays the threats posed to India in the current regional context and places more emphasis on the worsening regional environment that would follow as a consequence of conducting new nuclear tests. The articles conservatively argued that the situation did not merit an Indian push for overt nuclearisation nor dismantling its ability to develop the bomb in future should it need to:

"There is absolutely no need to have an atomic device for the protection of India's security. But giving up our nuclear option is another story."[65]

This perspective also highlighted two points common to anti-test arguments: the opportunity costs of developing nuclear weapons when the expenditure would be better suited to ameliorating India's economic and social development problems; and a pessimism regarding the ultimate utility of the bomb once developed toward solving the security challenges India faced.

These articles therefore argued that the current Indian policy, while not perfect, was still the best available. Developing nuclear weapons would land India with an expensive and dangerous defence project, which would worsen regional relations, elevate nuclear dangers, and reduce public policy focus and resources devoted to India's social and economic issues.

[64] Praful Bidwai, "Beggared by the Bomb: Dangerous Shift in Nuclear Doctrine", Times of India, April 21, 1998.

[65] Dhirendra Sharma, "Terror of Nuclear Winter", Hindustan Times, April 29, 1998.

However, giving up the option to develop a nuclear force in future would unnecessarily bind policymakers. There was no major need for Indian nuclear policy to be revised. The energies devoting to building bombs would be better devoted to new peace initiatives, as one article argued:

> *"If indeed the notion of deterrence has any validity it means freezing every dispute in its tracks – a prescription for utter frustration in both countries. On the other hand, if the notion is not really valid, as many assert, a war might yet result and if the nuclear weapons are there, in whatever form, shape or state, they will be used."*[66]

These authors were generally either aligned with the leftist/communist wing of Indian politics, or anti-nuclear or peace campaigners. These commentators therefore clearly occupied the non-Congress radical political left of Indian politics, highly critical of the BJP regime in its defence policy and most other aspects of its policy agenda.

Option 3: Unilaterally Forswear any Nuclear Weapons Development (18%)

These articles, in common with an anti-test opinion, shared many of the same assumptions as those arguing for opacity to be retained. However, they diverged from opacity arguments in taking the points regarding opportunity costs vis-à-vis social and economic development and the military disutility of the bomb further; if these risks were so obvious, why should India ever wish to develop a nuclear force at all? Why should the Indian government not announce its dismantlement of the capabilities to develop nuclear weapons, and obtain much more valuable moral capital and perhaps global political gains for its good practice in the process? As one comment suggested:

> *"…abandoning the weapon option for a price, perhaps a permanent seat on the Security Council or a privileged position in the American scheme of things, is something worth bargaining for in return for giving it up. Our noisy and intellectually barren bomb lobby has, in frightening unison, propagated the idea that*

[66] M.B. Naqvi, "Pakistan is Keen on Forging New Alliance with U.S.", Times of India, May 3, 1998.

nuclear weapons are good as deterrent weapons but useless as currency of power and influence."[67]

The view that Indian nuclearisation was inherently immoral and out of step with its cultural heritage, perceived as finding peaceable solutions wherever possible, was also aired:

"The mad race for nuclear weapon superiority must be stopped, particularly for a country claiming to be Gandhian…The money for such experiments can be found only be ignoring the basic needs of millions in our country."[68]

These arguments therefore emphasised certain aspects of the anti-test assumptions to lead to their conclusions; elevating the disutility of the bomb and the social and economic development opportunity costs India would suffer by its development; while more robustly dismissing the security threats India faced as resolvable through negotiation rather than military aggrandisement. The morality of disarmament, and morality questions in general, also received greater attentions here that in the arguments for weaponisation or for continuing opacity. The choice was clear for India, as presented by one article:

"The classic guns-versus-butter argument is never more stark than in the case of South Asia. Indeed, a single additional expenditure on a battle tank or new missile is the equivalent of forgoing social services for tens of millions of the poor."[69]

Authors in this camp included anti-nuclear scientists but also a pro-BJP foreign policy scholar. For the most part, its membership thus resembled those authors promoting option 2, for no new testing or changes to India's nuclear policy.

[67] Bharat Wariawalla, "Nuclear Option is an Illusion", Indian Express, December 16, 1997.

[68] Mohammad Hasan, "Taking Pak Mistrust in Our Stride", Times of India, May 28, 1997.

[69] Sujatha Byravan and Sudhir Chella Rajan, "BJP Up in Arms, But Little Else", Times of India, February 24, 1998.

Option 4: Rhetorically Assert Interest in Possessing Nuclear Weapons Option (6%)

The one article advocating this position, by a hawkish defence journalist, sought to reconcile the elevated regional nuclear threat perception of advocates of overt nuclearisation with the arguments in favour for continuing the opacity policy. The resultant compromise was to argue for the government to respond to the external pressures it faced by issuing a more robust verbal declaration of its right to possess a nuclear weapons option. This declaration would serve as a solution in itself, and would not need to be backed by any actual weapons development. In advocating a new nuclear policy activity by the government which would heighten the salience of nuclear weapons in its diplomacy, it is nevertheless different from the arguments for the status quo to be maintained. This approach, the argument held, would be enough to deter bad behaviour from Pakistan and China, while its inherent restraint would win plaudits from Washington.[70]

The prevalence of external factors as pressures on Indian nuclear policy is perhaps most visible in this argument; it attempts to balance policy as a response to, on one side, the threats posed by Pakistan and China pulling it in the direction of nuclearisation, and the United States on the other pulling it toward disarmament. This reactive compromise evidently proved unappealing within the discourse, as this argument was not made elsewhere.

2.7 Summary

The pro-test arguments portrayed a grave and worsening security situation, suggesting dark Pakistani and Chinese nuclear intentions along with further constraints soon to issue from Washington and the emerging CTBT, creating a sense of urgency. Any potential negative outcomes from Indian moves toward overt nuclear deterrence were downplayed. These articles offered a simple, clear policy route to correcting the security challenges they identified. The additional relative absence of internal disagreement within the pro-test arguments compared with the anti-test group further amplified their arguments.

[70] Manoj Joshi, "Short but Sweet", India Today, December 1, 1997.

The group of authors making pro-test arguments were principally retired military officers and hawkish defence scholars and journalists, some of the latter being close to the BJP. Some pro-Congress former ambassadors and commentators also supported this argument. This meant these authors were generally more likely to be closer to the government and supportive of its overall policy slate, increasing the chances of their arguments being heard by decisionmakers.

In contrast, the anti-test arguments saw a less threatening regional security situation, and one that could be sufficiently handled without recourse to the bomb. These articles chose instead to emphasise the risks and security problems for India that might issue from new nuclear tests. These arguments had high visibility and weight in the nuclear debate, enjoying a numerical majority in the sample. Drawing from India's nuclear history of abstinence from overt nuclearisation and spotlighting the myriad social and economic problems India faced as more deserving targets for the financial outlays of nuclear weapons development, this camp presented powerful and vocal cases for India to avoid the disastrous consequences they saw as inherent in testing.

However, in comparison with the coherence of the pro-test arguments, a range of different and at times mutually exclusive policy options were promoted in anti-test arguments. Although anti-test arguments enjoyed a slight majority over pro-test arguments overall, their lack of uniformity in comparison to pro-test arguments may have lessened their impact in the discourse.

The impact of the anti-test arguments may also have been further reduced by the political constellation of the commentators in this camp. These authors mainly consisted of members of the radical Indian political left. Fiercely critical of most elements of the BJP policy manifesto in general, it is unlikely that their arguments would enjoy the attentions of the pro-test authors, some of whom were personally close to the BJP and all of whom were more supportive of its government in general.

2.8 Selecting an Option

From this discursive context, three routes were available to policymakers: construct a policy that correlated with one promoted in the discourse; construct a policy that correlated with elements of policy options promoted in the discourse; or construct a policy not recommended at all in the discourse. In this instance, the government went with the first route, selecting a policy that correlated with Option 1, to shift Indian nuclear policy toward overt nuclear deterrence. Official justifications for the testing round echoed the rationales outlined in strategic discourse for new tests, emphasising deep perceived threats from Pakistan and China. The tests were portrayed by the government as the first step in a new Indian nuclear policy to develop overt nuclear deterrence and fully utilise the political and strategic weight that this status was perceived to bring to India.[71]

This produces interesting early findings. The overall weighting of the discourse on nuclear testing was weighted toward the "restraint" end of the spectrum. This would not appear to prefigure a policy shift toward a bolder nuclear policy. However, the discourse was fairly polarised, and only held a narrow majority in favour of restraint.

A second finding is that the majority opinion in the discourse, against a new nuclear testing round, did not correlate to the policy selected by the government. However, if we delve to the level of specific policy options promoted, there was little consensus within the anti-test grouping of arguments as to specific nuclear policy options, whereas in the pro-test grouping there was much more consensus. This could suggest the importance of the most popular policy option promoted, rather than its position within an overall pro- or anti- issue grouping, as more salient to understanding the correlation of discourse and policy. The government selected the most popular policy option in the discourse, rather than the most popular overall grouping of arguments. The government also selected the option promoted by authors most supportive of its policy agenda, as analysed in the previous section.

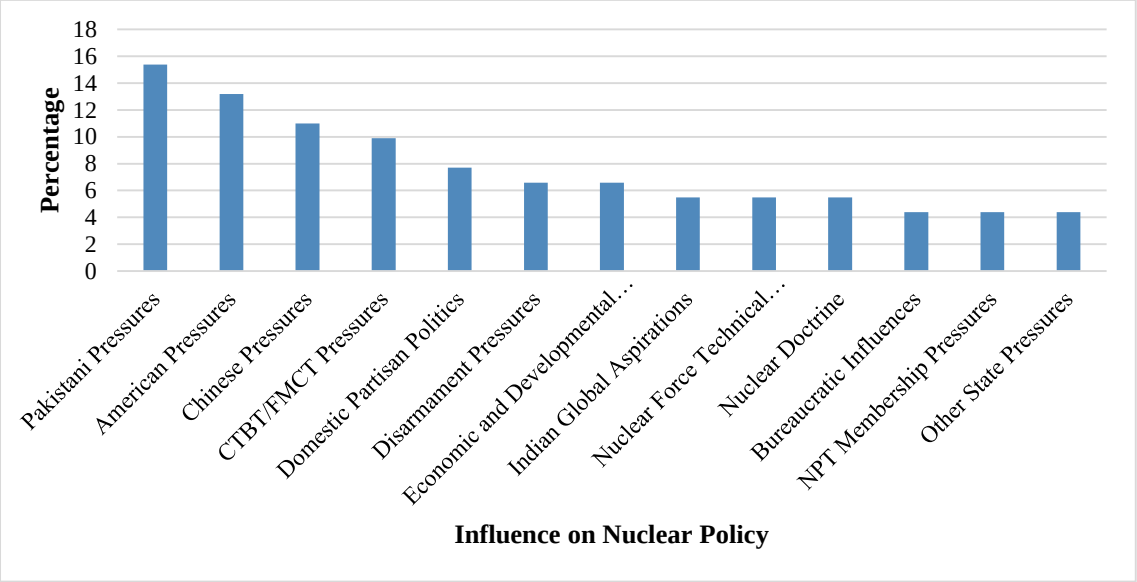
Having examined the policy options offered in discourse, we will now look in more detail at the specific issues cited as influential in shaping their arguments on nuclear policy. This will

[71] "Suo Moto Statement by Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament, 27 May, 1998".

allow us to see the nature of their influences, as well as allowing us to begin to track whether these issues and the form of their influence change over time.

2.9 Issues Cited in Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests

Figure 4: Issues Cited in Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests



The perspective of external forces as the dominant influences on Indian nuclear policy is illustrated by the top four issues cited in arguments on a new testing round being external; in order, activities by Pakistan, China, the United States, and pressures on India from the emerging CTBT/FMCT regimes.

This chapter will now look at each issue as presented in the discourse on a new testing round, to understand its framing as an influence on nuclear policy. The sense of Indian nuclear policy as responding to actions by Pakistan, China and the United States, as well as the importance of what the CTBT could mean for India's nuclear future, comes through clearly in this study. As shown in the table below, the articles also divided into different positions on the restraint/maximal policy spectrum depending on the issues they cited, which will also now be analysed.

Table 5: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Shift to Overt Nuclear Deterrence

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
Bureaucratic Influences	0
Chinese Pressures	0
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.14
American Pressures	-0.16
Average Attitude Score for All Articles Expressing Opinion on New Testing Round	*-0.18*
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-0.2
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	-0.33
Other State Pressures	-0.5
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.6
Pakistani Pressures	-0.64
Disarmament Pressures	-0.66
Economic and Developmental Needs	-0.83
Indian Global Aspirations	-1
NPT Membership Pressures	-1

There were no articles coded as ‘0’ (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) in this episode. Subsequent episodes will include a table of attitude scores as above, including articles coded as ‘0’ and those coded as‘-1’ or ‘1,’ for pro-restraint and maximalist views respectively. Where subsequent episodes included ‘0’ articles, attitude scores and polarisation indices excluding these ‘0’ articles will be provided alongside the results including these articles to see the degree of difference. The results including these articles will remain the principal focus of study.

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Pakistan has historically been at the top of India's threat hierarchy, with a past that involves an ongoing territorial dispute that has been labelled as only containable rather than solvable, four wars, several additional near-misses, and continuing militant subversion sponsored by the Pakistan government to destabilise the Indian polity. On top of this, we can latterly add the expanding nuclear force of Pakistan and perennial fears of state collapse. The simultaneous creation of India and Pakistan as independent political entities from the same predecessor state, and the bilateral nature of most of their subsequent conflicts, have bred a certain duality visible in the discussion as to how each state acts toward each other and toward the world.

While Pakistan's position as India's strategic rival might produce an expectation for a strong weighting toward maximal nuclear policies in articles discussing Pakistan, the actual balance of these articles toward supporting restraint measures is interesting. This highlights that the roots of the value of restraint within discourse persist even when discussing a visceral geopolitical foe, to the degree that the balance of articles citing Pakistan that favour restraint is even greater than the overall balance for articles discussing this policy question.
Indian nuclear discourse concerning Pakistan initiated with substantial concern over its military nuclear capabilities and the degree of Chinese assistance underpinning them.

The latter point, of the nature and threat posed by Chinese missile and nuclear technological assistance provided to Pakistan, recurs throughout the discourse. Pakistan's test of the 300km-range Hatf-III missile in July 1997, and of the Ghauri missile in April 1998, stimulated a wave of introspection as to how India should respond to Pakistan's nuclear boldness. The Hatf missile was allegedly developed from a precursor M-11 missile model supplied by China to Pakistan in 1993.[72] Given this multifaceted nuclear threat and the contrasting lassitude by the Indian government in developing its own missile platforms, the Prithvi and Agni, what should India do?

[72] Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Pakistan: Country Profile", available at http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/pakistan/

The pervasive perception of the Pakistan-China proliferation link as a grave threat to Indian security recurs in these articles. Pressure began to grow for an assertive clarification of Indian nuclear policy in this context and for an end to the previous policy of nuclear opacity and hesitant missile development. However, at the same time, there was still a strong constituency for peace measures rather than nuclear hawkishness to end the strategic rivalry with Pakistan.[73]

Pakistan therefore served as a canvas that debate on a new testing round was projected onto in the strategic discourse. Its activities, as shown by the fevered commentary on the importance of new Pakistani missile tests or on generating new diplomatic initiatives to forestall worsening bilateral tensions, played the most significant role in this discourse.

Issue: American Pressures

The United States had long served as a major antagonist for Indian nuclear aspirations. Washington was widely viewed in Indian nuclear discourse to have led efforts to constrain India's great power potential. Its various perceived sins can be largely divided into two groups: its role in the vanguard of the NPT-based nonproliferation regime; and its bias toward Pakistan and occasionally China over India in its great power diplomacy.

American leadership in developing and extending the NPT-based global nonproliferation regime is indeed still visible today. The principal Indian complaint against the treaty is its discriminatory format, which legalises nuclear arsenal possession for those states conducting nuclear tests or developing weapons before January 1, 1967, while other signatories promise never to do the same.[74] Since the conclusion of the treaty, a central pillar of American diplomacy toward India was to demand it sign the treaty, while rejecting Indian diplomatic efforts to strengthen efforts toward disarmament that the treaty commits its recognised nuclear weapons states to pursue.

[73] K. Subrahmanyam, "Dangerous Liaisons: Pakistan Back on US Agenda", Times of India, July 21, 1997; Editorial, "More Pragmatism – Gujral-Clinton Talks Went Well Enough", Indian Express, September 24, 1997.

[74] *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.*

Other strands of American nuclear diplomacy have more specifically targeted India. Following India's 1974 nuclear test, Washington condemned New Delhi and led multilateral efforts to impose sanctions on India's ability to access international nuclear technology and sanctions.[75] Continual American reiterations of its demand that India give up a nuclear weapons option and sign the NPT coloured bilateral diplomacy right up until the 1998 tests.

These tensions were joined by those concerning America's perceived great-power preferences. America had long worked more closely with Pakistan than India as a strategic partner in containing the Soviet Union. Perceptions that Indian nonalignment was a guise for pro-Soviet preferences were commonplace in Washington. Pakistan benefited from access to American defence technology, alongside occasional diplomatic support. This also extended to the near-silence of American diplomats on the question of Chinese proliferation aid to Pakistan.

However, there was also a realisation in the discourse that the post-Cold War period appeared to be an emerging unipolar world, and that building better relations and some strategic accord with Washington on the above issues was essential for India's great-power aspirations. These tensions characterised the main themes of the discourse citing American influences in discussing a prospective new testing round: the United States as a strategic nuclear actor to emulate and perhaps improve relations with; and as a difficult obstacle to navigate in bolstering Indian foreign and security policy independence. This duality was illustrated in the discourse spending much time discussing likely American responses to a new nuclear test as a major part of the cost-benefit analysis.

As the BJP looked more likely to form the next government in early 1998, US officials began to take interest in its manifesto commitment to *"re-evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons"*. American diplomacy placed greater emphasis on its opposition to Indian nuclearisation and sought meetings with leading BJP members to persuade them of this point. This advocacy brought a certain defensiveness in the discourse, as it was felt to impinge upon India's ability to decide its own external policy.[76]

[75] One of the outcomes of this campaign was the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a multilateral nuclear technology export control group that is now a bulwark of the NPT-based global nonproliferation regime.

[76] Manoj Joshi, "Newsnotes: South Block – Post-Poll Concerns", India Today, February 16, 1998.

The heavy-handed American diplomacy to dissuade India against the bomb, against the backdrop of longstanding US efforts to constrain its foreign and security policy ambitions, thus bred a relatively stronger preference for maximal nuclear policies in the discourse citing American influence than for that of Pakistan.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

It is testament to the degree of attention devoted to American influences in the Indian nuclear debate that the United States was cited more frequently as a salient issue to nuclear policy than China, India's other major strategic rival alongside Pakistan. China in the Indian strategic discourse enjoys a status that is often likened to a neurosis, rooted in large part due to its confident military defeat of India in a 1962 border war; its often opaque intentions; and accelerating disparity with India in economic and military clout. Indian analysts today oscillate between viewing Beijing as orchestrating a grand strategic conspiracy to constrain New Delhi and a potential partner with whom ultimately beneficial strategic relations can be built.[77]

The Chinese factor has a notable nuclear dimension to it. The shock defeat to China in the 1962 war was followed by China's first nuclear test in 1964, shattering Indian strategic preconceptions that mutual friendship between the two great Asian civilisations was inevitable. Also, China's fortune in testing before the 1967 cutoff date under the NPT led to its recognition as a legitimate weapons possessor under the treaty. It has subsequently supported Pakistan's nuclear development, viewing Pakistan as an important partner against Indian intransigence.[78] Although China did not sign the NPT until 1992, these activities certainly contravened the global norms against proliferation that the treaty regime cultivated. The rhetorical question of why China, an NPT member, was permitted seeming carte blanche

[77] Harsh V. Pant, *The China Syndrome: Grappling with an Uneasy Relationship* (New Delhi: HarperCollins India, 2010).

[78] Areas of assistance included providing nuclear warhead blueprints from the late 1970s, M-11 ballistic missile technology from 1988 and reactors. See World Nuclear Association, "Nuclear Power in Pakistan", available at http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/Pakistan/#.Uaxdf2R4af8, and Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Pakistan: Country Profile".

to proliferate to Pakistan while India's own nuclear efforts were punished and restraint unrewarded was prominent in the discourse on prospective new Indian tests.
The sense of an overt Indian nuclear arsenal as a necessary response to the growing Chinese threat was commonly evoked as a principal justification for new tests.[79] The degree of the threat perceived from China is also highlighted by the weakness of the "restraint" norm in articles citing China discussing prospective new nuclear tests, with an average attitude score of 0, equidistant between "restraint" and "maximal" policies on the attitude spectrum. This less pronounced adherence to restraint arguments suggests a greater pessimism regarding the likely success of restrained policies in relations with China as opposed to Pakistan, and in turn more aggressive Indian views toward China than Pakistan as a rival.

Issue: CTBT/FMCT Pressures

The emergence of the nascent Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) as two new features of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, and their potential impacts on Indian nuclear policy flexibility, was another prominent element of the Indian discourse on new nuclear tests. The CTBT intended to bar signatories from conducting new nuclear tests, with the notable exception of "subcritical" tests not involving a full nuclear chain-reaction explosion, while the FMCT would establish limits to fissile material production and thus the potential size of nuclear arsenals.[80]

Indian diplomacy concerning these treaties in the period leading up to the testing round reflected the disquiet regarding their intentions within domestic discourse. An early Indian initiative from the launch of CTBT negotiations in 1993 was to embed a time-bound disarmament commitment within the treaty text, without which, New Delhi feared, the document would become merely another tool for the "legitimised" nuclear weapons states to freeze their nuclear technological hegemony and prevent new nuclear weapons states emerging. Once it became apparent that this disarmament clause would not be accepted,

[79] Maharajakrishna Rasgotra, "Nuclear Deterrence: Need for New Security Doctrine", Times of India, July 16, 1997.

[80] Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, "What is Subcritical Testing?" available at http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/issues/testing/subcritical-what-is-st.htm

Indian willingness to sign the eventual treaty dissipated. The desire to avoid accepting multilateral restraints on India's ability to develop nuclear weapons also formed a main driver of Indian opposition to the treaty.

Although India voted against the final treaty text at the UN General Assembly in 1996, the treaty still passed, ensuring its position as a new fixture of the global nonproliferation regime. Its status as an issue Indian nuclear policy inevitably had to contend with was amplified by its annexe specifying that the treaty could not fully come into force unless India among other states ratified it.[81]

The Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations were launched with a supportive vote from the UN General Assembly in 1993 to initiate negotiations, these negotiations then being taken up by the Conference on Disarmament in 1995. A final text has still not been agreed at the time of writing, with Indian diplomacy following a similar line to that in the CTBT negotiations; rejection absent a time-bound disarmament commitment in the treaty text. However, the prospect of an FMCT loomed as a threat to Indian nuclear policy flexibility within the discourse. Ongoing multilateral pressure on India to sign the CTBT, much of it from the United States, plus a scheduled treaty conference in October 1999 to review progress toward its ratification, also created a sense within the discourse of a window closing within which India could conduct tests before material or normative restrictions against testing caused by the treaty became operable.

The reality that the CTBT question in Indian discourse was freighted with other issues, particularly the health of the relationship with the United States, becomes apparent in the articles.[82] The extension of CTBT-related discussion to incorporate opinions about the status of bilateral relations with the United States further amplifies the sense of Indian nuclear policy being most strongly influenced by external forces in the discourse. The top four issues cited as above are all external, and it is only the fifth issue, of Domestic Partisan Politics, that introduces domestic influences to the testing discussion. The average attitude score of -0.33 in articles citing CTBT/FMCT Pressures as an influence, weighted more toward the restraint

[81] Article XIV, "Entry into Force", and Annex 2, "List of States Pursuant to Article XIV", *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty*, available at http://www.ctbto.org/fileadmin/content/treaty/treatytext.tt.html

[82] Brahma Chellaney, "Nuclear Option: The Unresolved Issue", Times of India, August 8, 1997.

end of the spectrum than the overall average of -0.18. This signals the importance within the discourse of finding a way for India to signal its continuing nuclear interests in a limited way that would minimise a multilateral backlash.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

The role of Domestic Partisan Politics as contributor to Indian nuclear policy formulation is, as observed above, notable in its rank as merely the fifth most salient influence and the first specifically domestic influence seen as important in shaping Indian nuclear policy. This is especially noteworthy given the main point made by articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics: that the current nuclear policy of opacity enjoyed a domestic political consensus that should not be disturbed unless following a period of wide-ranging domestic parliamentary debate to arrive at a new consensus.

Despite this point, this discourse inherently recognises the reduced importance of the domestic political consensus by citing it less regularly than external issues. This fact coincides with the decision by the BJP government not to involve Parliament in its decision to conduct the tests, with the tests themselves marking a dramatic break from the previous domestic political consensus.

The framing of parliamentary consensus as a value in itself that should guide any official efforts to reconsider nuclear policy is striking in articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics. Discourse on prospective new tests focused primarily on the degree to which the incoming BJP government's promise to *"exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons"* deviated from or remained in conformity with this consensus. While one analyst criticised the prospective BJP approach as *"an unprincipled, violent break with long-established consensus"*,[83] another questioned the extent to which a BJP policy would substantially differ from that of the previous Congress-led governments.[84]

[83] Praful Bidwai, "Seeking a Paradigm Shift", Frontline, April 24, 1998.

[84] Joshi, "Deadly Option".

A sense that the opacity policy needed to be reviewed and was not achieving desired outcomes for Indian security reflects the average attitude score of -0.14 for articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics as an issue. This score signifies a weak adherence to restraint on the opinion spectrum, and is less aligned to restraint than the average score for articles discussing new nuclear tests. Indeed, articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics often did so to support an argument for a more overt nuclear policy. However, the degree of influence of Domestic Partisan Politics on nuclear policy was evidently not seen in discourse or in the conduct of government policy surrounding the tests as particularly great.

Issue: Disarmament Pressures

Indian nuclear policy had long prioritised efforts toward nuclear disarmament. Declaratory policy at the UN and in other multilateral fora sought to maintain global nuclear disarmament on the policy agenda, and, as we have seen, supporting tougher disarmament commitments in treaty texts was core to its approach toward the CTBT and FMCT. The Indian commitment to nuclear disarmament was seen within discourse as a key to its unique "moral" stance to global security, distinguishing it from the realpolitik of other major actors.[85] The Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, launched at the UN General Assembly in 1988, enjoined states to commit to total nuclear disarmament within fifteen years.[86] The relationship of a new testing round to India's disarmament stance would therefore prove a thorny question in discourse on new tests.

Articles citing Disarmament Pressures as an issue recognised the declaratory importance of India continuing to adhere to a long-term policy of complete global disarmament. However, they differed on the policy routes toward this goal. Pro-test articles suggested that India's voice on disarmament and other issues would be louder if it were able to sit at the top table as

[85] For background on the strong affinity for idealistic posturing in Indian foreign policy, see Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon*, pp. xi-xxii.

[86] See "India and Disarmament", Permanent Mission of India to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, available at http://meaindia.nic.in/pmicd.geneva/?1017

an established nuclear power. They argued that developing the bomb and then pressing for nuclear disarmament was the path other world powers had successfully taken.[87]

However, anti-test arguments held that a testing round would severely undermine India's credibility in pressing for global nuclear disarmament, and that India's moral integrity gained by its disarmament advocacy was more valuable than the risks and wastes of an expensive nuclear weapons programme. Proceeding with tests risked changing India's global profile from this moral clarity to that of an *"expansionist, hegemonistic power"*.[88]

While disarmament pressures are thus an important element to the Indian nuclear debate, its determinative importance is somewhat limited by its rank as but the sixth most salient influence on nuclear policy in strategic discourse. The average attitude score of -0.66, strongly toward the restraint end of the opinion spectrum, reflects the tendency for disarmament issues to be more regularly cited by articles urging restraint rather than maximalist policies, and more specifically by anti-test articles.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

The opportunity costs of investing public resources in nuclear weapons as opposed to economic and social development programmes was almost exclusively cited by anti-test arguments.[89] The rank of economic and social issues as the seventh most cited issue in discourse on new tests highlights the perception of this issue as not particularly influential on nuclear policy. Indeed, the articles citing this issue mainly frame it as part of a plea for policymakers to begin to pay attention to this opportunity cost perspective as part of their consideration of nuclear policy. The average attitude score of -0.83, very strongly leaning toward restraint of the opinion spectrum, highlights the near-exclusive mentioning of this issue in anti-test and pro-restraint arguments. Pro-test arguments tended merely to emphasise a threatening external environment as urgently requiring a more overt and expansive nuclear

[87] Bharat Wariawalla, "Nuclear Option is an Illusion", Indian Express, December 16, 1997.

[88] John Cherian, "The BJP and the Bomb", Frontline, April 24, 1998.

[89] Mohammad Hasan, "Taking Pak Mistrust in Our Stride", Times of India, May 28, 1997.

policy, rather than engaging themselves with the economic and social needs competing for attention with a more overt nuclear policy.

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

India's desired global role and self-perceived international image served as another influence on nuclear policy in discourse. Indian strategic discourse has long featured an affinity for India to stake a moralising mission in the world. This tendency was largely influenced by founding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's adoption of a "nonalignment" foreign and security policy approach that sought to set moral examples in statecraft through preferring peaceable negotiation to militarised bloc politics. However, this idiosyncratic outlook does not conflict with long-term ambitions of Indian diplomacy, including a permanent UN Security Council seat as well as full representation at other top tables of global diplomacy. Although there is a robust debate within India as to the virtues of nonalignment in itself, there is nevertheless underpinning this a strong conviction that the world needs India's unique voice and influence to solve its problems.

Whether new nuclear tests would amplify or undermine this voice formed a notable aspect of the debate, and ultimately involved deeper domestic questions about the kind of global actor India should be. Pro-test arguments, speaking in realist terms, suggested that only through new tests could India be able to safeguard its own interests as a precursor to advancing its global aspirations.[90]

However, most articles citing Indian global aspirations as an influence on nuclear policy emphasised likely negative impacts of tests on India's global role. As well as eroding the credibility of India's disarmament advocacy, India could suffer other political costs from testing, as these articles argued.[91]

The ranking of this factor as the eighth most cited influence on nuclear policy, however, illustrates the limited working of these questions on the discourse on new nuclear tests

[90] Chellaney, "Nuclear Option: The Unresolved Issue".

[91] Praful Bidwai, "Seeking a Paradigm Shift", Frontline, April 24, 1998.

comparative to other, most visibly external state-centric pressures. Also, the average attitude score of -1, representing absolute consensus for restraint on the opinion spectrum, highlights the principal deployment of India's global role and image by arguments emphasising Indian nuclear restraint and linking this image as a casualty of any new testing round.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

The capabilities of the existing nuclear force, their adequacy to meet India's defence requirements, and the political and military possibilities based upon these immediate capabilities was a recognisable influence on the discourse surrounding nuclear tests, although only ninth out of the thirteen influences identifiable. The opacity that was the hallmark of Indian nuclear policy prior to the tests created difficulties for non-governmental analysts in obtaining the exact details of India's nuclear force capabilities. However, there was broad agreement that India possessed nuclear explosive materials and expertise from the 1974 nuclear test, and two principal missile platforms, the Prithvi (150km range) and Agni (700km range).

Opinions on the adequacy of these nuclear forces predictably divided along the lines of author's positions on new nuclear tests. Pro-test arguments cited a perceived lack of missile testing, uncertain warhead design abilities, and operational experience in managing a nuclear force as indicative of a growing and dangerous gap in nuclear capabilities with those of Pakistan and China.[92] However, anti-test arguments felt these capabilities already sufficed for Indian security, and that improving India's nuclear technical capabilities would only escalate regional tensions.[93]

This debate is one of the central dilemmas for nuclear states, described as the "How much is enough?" question. How many nuclear warheads, kilotons of destructive yield, and miles of range is required for a state's nuclear deterrence to be seen as credible – and thus operable – by potential adversaries? Does establishing nuclear deterrence require an expansive, diversified nuclear arsenal, mathematically guaranteed to overcome that of an adversary in a

[92] Joshi, "Deadly Option".

[93] N. Ram, "The Risks of Nuclear Hawkishness", Frontline, April 24, 1998.

theorised nuclear exchange? Or is the possession of a few warheads and delivery vehicles – represented here as "the nuclear option" by anti-test proponents – sufficient? Does the deterrent threat emanate from mere possession of some nuclear capabilities, or only after development of an extensive arsenal providing overwhelming destructive potential?[94]

While these two poles have marked the contours of the US debate, it is important not to shoehorn the Indian discourse into these unique and contextual categories. The most notable disjuncture of the Indian debate on deterrence in this period from that of the US is, with a few exceptions, the tendency by advocates of new tests, believing credibility to be dependent on overt and defined capabilities, to nevertheless condition their arguments on the need for only a small nuclear force.[95] This again highlights the persistence of the norm of restraint throughout the discourse on new nuclear tests. The average attitude score of -0.2 for articles citing nuclear force technical capabilities as an influence on policy also signals a slight adherence to this organising value of restraint.

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

The influence of the contemporary Indian nuclear doctrine of opacity on nuclear policy was cited tenth most frequently out of the thirteen influences in the discourse. More influential pressures on nuclear policy were visible by their citation in greater numbers than nuclear doctrine. A pro-test analysis framed the nuclear doctrine rather as an equilibrium between nuclear decisions than a real doctrine.[96] Indeed, anti-test articles implicitly agreed with this analysis that the current doctrine needed some amendments. They argued that the opacity doctrine instead needed greater definition through official advocacy and public understanding.

[94] For various views on this question, see Jeffrey G. Lewis, *The Minimum Means of Reprisal: China's Search for Security in the Nuclear Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2007) p. 3; and Albert Wohlstetter, *The Delicate Balance of Terror* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1958).

[95] Chellaney, "Nuclear Option: The Unresolved Issue".

[96] Jasjit Singh, "The Challenges of Strategic Defence", Frontline, April 24, 1998.

The average attitude score of -0.6, strongly aligned with the restraint norm, signifies the tendency of Nuclear Doctrine to be cited as part of arguments for Indian nuclear policy to continue to the greatest degree possible the restraint inherent in nuclear opacity. Where pro-test and anti-test arguments diverged was how to reconcile this restraint with the security threats India faced.

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

India's nuclear establishment, consisting of the defence bureaucratic agencies responsible for developing military nuclear platforms and managing India's nuclear infrastructure, have certain advisory roles in the nuclear policy process. The head of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the agency for developing India's ballistic missile and other nuclear delivery platforms, also serves as Chief Scientific Advisor to the Defence Ministry. The Indian Prime Minister traditionally also holds the atomic energy ministerial portfolio, permitting the head of the Atomic Energy Commission direct access to the Prime Minister's office rather than through numerous intermediary organisations that block, limit or distort policy advocacy that, for example, confound intergovernmental communication by the military services. As a further contribution to nuclear affairs, agency heads from the nuclear bureaucracies also regularly publicly proffer their opinions on nuclear policy.

Given these substantive influences, it is therefore surprising that they are so underweighted in the discourse on new nuclear tests, as the eleventh most frequently cited issue out of thirteen influences on nuclear policy in discourse on new tests. The above bureaucracies heavily lobbied for new nuclear tests, but this does not reflect as a notably visible influence on nuclear discourse.

There is indeed no dominant story regarding the nature of Bureaucratic Influences on nuclear policy among articles citing it as salient in discourse on new nuclear tests. For bureaucratic activities to be highlighted as an influence in the discourse, their influence must be identified and cited as a factor in nuclear policymaking. Their influence may be slightly underweighted here, given that this is less perceptible than other developments more openly in the public domain. This relative invisibility of the nature of bureaucratic interactions compared to, for example, an ostentatious missile test by Pakistan, may perhaps create an underweighting in

the discourse as an influence. This would also account for the disagreement in the discourse as to the policy direction in which the bureaucracies are pushing policymakers. Indeed, this is reflected in the average attitude score of 0 for articles citing Bureaucratic Influences, illustrating that this issue was cited in equal numbers for articles supporting nuclear restraint and maximalist policies.

Issue: NPT Membership Pressures

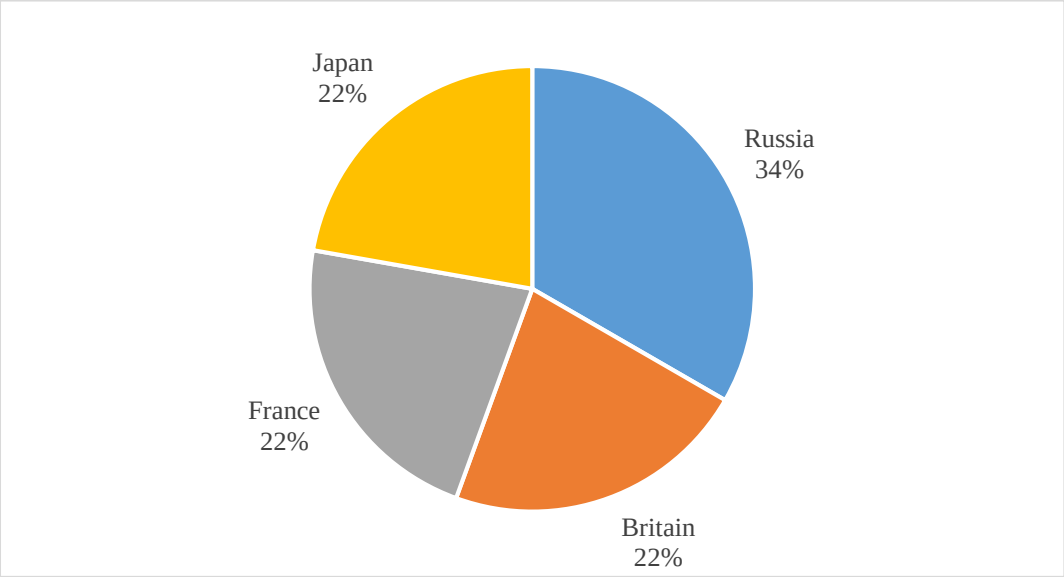
Multilateral pressure on India to sign the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state, thus forswearing the possibility of developing nuclear weapons and dismantling the technical means to do so, was identified as an influence in the discourse. However, its ranking as joint least-cited influence suggests a dismissive attitude by commentators as to the degree of pressure India really faced comparative to other issues discussed. No articles mentioning the NPT as an influence recommended that India sign it. Instead, the NPT was framed either as part of the general global nuclear landscape Indian nuclear policy must confront, or as an unrealistic option used as a foil for advancing the author's preferred nuclear policy.[97] The average attitude score of -1 signifies absolute consensus in arguments for restraint. This illustrates inclusion of NPT membership as an issue in pro-restraint arguments, whereas maximal policy arguments tended mainly to focus on state-centric nuclear and security threats to India.

Issue: Other State Pressures

States outside the major three – Pakistan, China and the United States – served as joint least-cited influence in the discourse on new nuclear tests. States cited in this category included Russia, Britain, France and Japan, with a depiction of the balance of articles citing each state below.

[97] Rasgotra, "Nuclear Deterrence: Need for New Security Doctrine".

Figure 5: Additional States Cited as Influences in Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests



Russia, as the state most frequently cited in this category, was principally discussed in its role as a nuclear weapons state under the NPT and collusion in perpetuating the unequal NPT regime. One article developed this point to include Soviet pressure on India to conduct no further tests following its 1974 nuclear test, to impress the likely global reaction to new Indian tests. An additional amplification of this point was provided by another author, who highlighted Russia's ratification of the Chemical Weapons Treaty in October 1997 as strengthening an international norm against developing weapons of mass destruction that would raise the political costs of India conducting nuclear tests.[98]

Britain and France were also mentioned in the forms of their role in advancing the unfair NPT regime as "legitimate" nuclear weapons states. Japan was identified in its pressure for India to sign the CTBT.[99] The average attitude score of -0.5 by articles citing other state influences, representing clear alignment with the restraint end of the opinion spectrum, reflects the incorporation of these other states into arguments detailing the costs for India in developing nuclear weapons.

[98] Wariawalla, "Nuclear Option is an Illusion"; Bidwai, "Seeking a Paradigm Shift".

[99] Joshi, "Deadly Option"; Ram, "The Risks of Nuclear Hawkishness".

2.10 Discourse on Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests: Conclusions

Our analysis of the strategic discourse prior to the decision to shift Indian nuclear policy toward overt nuclear deterrence and conduct new nuclear tests has produced interesting results. The balance of opinion narrowly preferred that India not conduct new tests. This means that, on one level, the government decision to do so went against the grain of the discourse. However, this picture changes when we examine the discourse in terms of specific policy options recommended. The anti-test arguments differed amongst themselves on their specific policy responses to the situation India faced. This led the recommendation to conduct tests and develop an overt nuclear force to be the most popular policy option in the discourse. This correlation of the most popular policy option with eventual government policy demonstrates that strategic discourse serves as one input in the policymaking process.

The policy option selected by the government also resembled that promoted by those commentators most sympathetic to the governing party and its policy agenda. Authors close to the BJP or supportive of its defence policies were most likely to call for new tests and development of an overt nuclear force. The other policy options were mainly recommended by authors more sympathetic to the Congress party, or the radical left and communists, the latter group sitting at the polar opposite of the spectrum to the BJP. As well as the pro-test policy option being the most numerically popular in the discourse, its advocacy by supporters of the government in the media can have further accounted for the success of the pro-test policy option. Other nuclear options were promoted by commentators more likely to be critics of government, potentially reducing the receptivity of elected decisionmakers to their arguments.

The norm of restraint has also been shown to be a dominant characteristic of the strategic discourse. This is illustrated by the average attitude score of -0.18, slightly leaning toward restraint on the opinion spectrum. Articles arguing for tests frequently sought to condition their point by framing it as part of a longstanding Indian tradition of nuclear restraint, postulating a future minimal nuclear arsenal, no-first-use, and other restraint measures. This suggests restraint and the need for India to demonstrate restraint as a principal conceptual underpinning of the Indian nuclear discourse. Authors promoting the need for tests, clearly the least restrained policy generated within the discourse, still evidently felt the need to

legitimate this argument by finding ways to locate it within an overarching image of nuclear restraint. This highlights restraint as an organising value for the discourse, and perhaps a core tenet of Indian nuclear strategic culture as the study continues.

The influences on Indian nuclear policy in the discourse were mostly external in nature. Pressures on India emanating from Pakistan, the United States, China, and the emerging CTBT/FMCT regimes served as the top four influences cited in the discourse on new tests. Indeed, external influences accounted for two-thirds of the influences cited overall. This created a sense of Indian nuclear policy as having to navigate a context set for it by powerful external forces, rather than one originating mainly in domestic impulses or responding to domestic political imperatives. This sense of external pressure manifested itself in frequently cited examples such as Pakistan's growing nuclear program, American demands for India to give up its nuclear option, the looming entry-into-force of the CTBT, and the perceived willingness of the global non-proliferation regime to overlook China's continuing proliferation to Pakistan in its condemnation of India's nuclear policy. General sentiments that India should reassert its interests against these headwinds were popular in the discourse. However, the means by which India should do so was where the policy options differed.

This perception of external pressure undermined Indian confidence in the validity of its existing nuclear policy of opacity for this new context. This was reflected in 65% of the discourse recommending policies that diverged from opacity; 47% recommending nuclear tests and a shift to overt nuclear deterrence, and 18% calling for nuclear disarmament. A majority in the discourse therefore felt that the situation demanded a break from the old nuclear policy. However, most authors holding this opinion felt the direction should be toward new tests. These authors were also more likely to be supporters of the BJP government and thus enjoy greater receptivity from decisionmakers to their ideas than the minority of anti-BJP leftist commentators, arguing for disarmament. While these commentators still occupied an influential berth in nuclear policy debates, the pro-test constellation enjoyed both numerical superiority in the discourse and closeness to the serving government.

The capabilities of the existing nuclear force, their adequacy to meet India's defence requirements, and the political and military possibilities based upon these immediate capabilities was a recognisable influence on the discourse surrounding nuclear tests, although

only ninth out of the thirteen influences here. The important characteristic of this influence in the discourse was for advocates of new tests, believing credibility to be dependent on overt and defined capabilities, to nevertheless condition their arguments on the need for only a small nuclear force. This further emphasises the persistence of the norm of restraint throughout this discourse on new nuclear tests.

We have therefore seen a correlation between the strategic discourse on a nuclear policy question and the eventual government policy, with the most popular policy option resembling the policy decision. We will now see if the above tendencies of the correlation between discourse and policy persisted with the next major policy decision in our study, the revision of Indian nuclear doctrine following the tests.

Chapter 3: Decision: 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine

3.1 Introduction

Following the nuclear tests, immediate international and domestic pressure came upon the Indian government to clarify the political and military meaning of the tests, and, for the most part, desist from further nuclear testing. The announcement by the government that India was now an overt nuclear power, and that the previous policy of opacity was to be discarded, invited questions for the government as to what policy would replace it. This set the stage for the next major nuclear policy decision the government faced: to explain its new nuclear thinking in the form of a new specific doctrine, India's first, or to refrain from such efforts, suggesting a continuity with the previous policy through the absence of public communication. If the government did decide to develop a nuclear doctrine, what content, guidelines and values would populate it?

India faced an immediate vituperative international response to the nuclear tests. The testing round was planned in extreme secrecy, creating a shock that filled global headlines as they were conducted. They posed a direct political and normative challenge to the global non-proliferation regime, a special interest of the Clinton administration. The tests especially threatened the global non-proliferation policy efforts to entrench a norm against nuclear testing through the CTBT. The political rationale underpinning this treaty was to change perceptions and raise the reputational political costs of testing in the decades to come. The Indian nuclear tests, in threatening this narrative of gradual but irreversible movement toward de-operationalising nuclear forces and global nuclear disarmament, generated unprecedented and almost universal opprobrium for its diplomats in the early days as the dust at Pokhran settled.

The extent of the damage was such that newspapers detailed the numerous statements of verbal condemnation from the United States, Russia, European states, Japan, Australia, and others. These also highlighted their declared intent to impose economic sanctions, and the potential economic downturn India now faced as a result of the tests.[100]

[100] Manoj Joshi, "Nuclear Shockwaves", India Today, May 25, 1998.

These fears were not misplaced. The UN Security Council assembled to pass Resolution 1172 in early June 1998, which denounced the tests and enshrined technology sanctions against India and Pakistan in international law. The resolution outlined the determination of the UN Security Council for the global non-proliferation regime to withstand the challenge the Indian tests had laid before it. It also demanded immediate Indian accession to the Nonproliferation Treaty, CTBT and full cooperation in negotiating a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty with other states. Amidst this mounting pressure upon India at the UN, it was also clear that the tests had ended its prospects of becoming a permanent member at the Security Council for the foreseeable future.[101]

This sense of Indian international isolation was elevated by Clinton's diplomatic visit to Beijing in June 1998. A private letter from Vajpayee to Clinton explaining the tests had named China as a prime reason for overt Indian nuclearisation. The White House leaked this private letter to the American media, causing embarrassment in New Delhi and urgent reassurances from Indian diplomats to Beijing regarding India's peaceful intentions. To add injury to insult, Washington began signalling a preference for China as a more responsible strategic partner than India. This aroused Indian consternation given China's continuing proliferation to Pakistan. The capstone of this trajectory was the joint statement issued during the Clinton state visit, in which the United States and China appeared to be of the same mind in condemning the Indian tests.[102]

This hostile international context required substantial Indian public diplomacy to salvage its international relationships and prevent the imposition of sanctions where possible. The key task was to credibly signal nuclear restraint and responsibility, while protecting India's right to develop a nuclear force. A document or statement outlining these intentions would complement this aim. The United States, among other states, also demanded this clarification of India's official nuclear thinking in their bilateral talks following the tests.

[101] U.N. Security Council Resolution 1172, June 6, 1998, available at http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1998/sc6528.doc.htm

[102] Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, "Sino-U.S. Joint Statement on South Asia", Beijing, June 27, 1998, available at http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zysj/kldfh/t36228.htm

The domestic reaction to the tests also pressured for greater clarification of India's nuclear plans. The tests were as unexpected domestically as they were internationally. They obtained laudatory editorials congratulating the government and scientists for what was an undeniable marker of Indian technological capability. However, these were tempered by an acknowledgement of the above political and economic risks India now faced as the price of the tests. The editorials demanded that the government announce the next steps forward for India, including outlining its nuclear thinking, new peace efforts with Pakistan, and how it would economically counteract the looming sanctions.

There was more diversity of opinion among media commentators than among the editorials. Most commentators, especially those on the centre-right, welcomed the tests as necessary for Indian security and started proposing strategies for the new nuclear force in order to fill the doctrine gap. The opposition Congress party on the centre-left did not condemn the tests, instead attempting to appropriate their aura of achievement. Congress claimed they would not have been possible without the preparatory technical work undertaken by previous Congress governments.

However, significant elements of the leftist media bitterly criticised the tests. These made two main arguments. The first was to highlight the tremendous opportunity cost from a limited budget of allocating substantial financial resources to nuclear weaponry that could instead be devoted to resolving India's social and economic problems. The second drew its moral force from the pacifist ideal of Gandhi and an image of an atavistic United States, arguing that by developing the bomb, India was merely seeking to emulate the imperialist Western nuclear states. These articles demanded that India rid itself of its weapons to demonstrate its moral superiority to these states, and make new peace efforts with its rivals rather than proceed further down the futile road of nuclearisation. Such sentiments were also shared by the Communist Party of India, which played prominent a role in Indian politics, including governing the state of West Bengal. While these arguments were still a minority of the public response to the tests, their vigour is important to understanding the domestic political environment immediately following the tests.

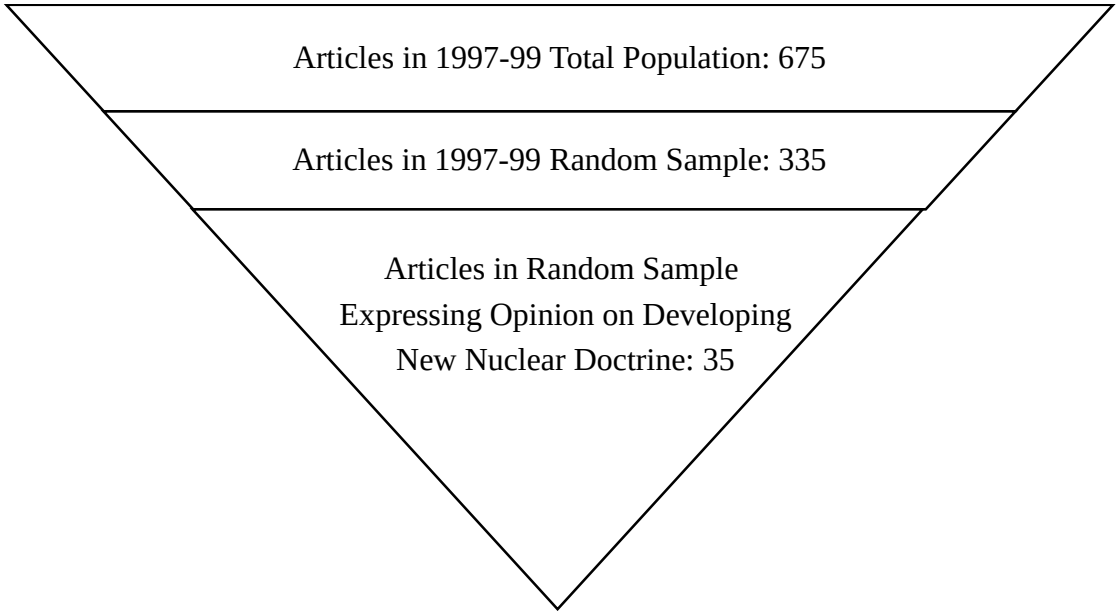
The government thus came under immense pressure from both international and domestic opinion to clarify its nuclear thinking and demonstrate some measures of nuclear restraint

through this process. These next steps in India's nuclear journey, toward formulating its first public nuclear doctrine, became the main concern of strategic discourse following the tests.

3.2 Balance of Discourse on Developing New Nuclear Doctrine

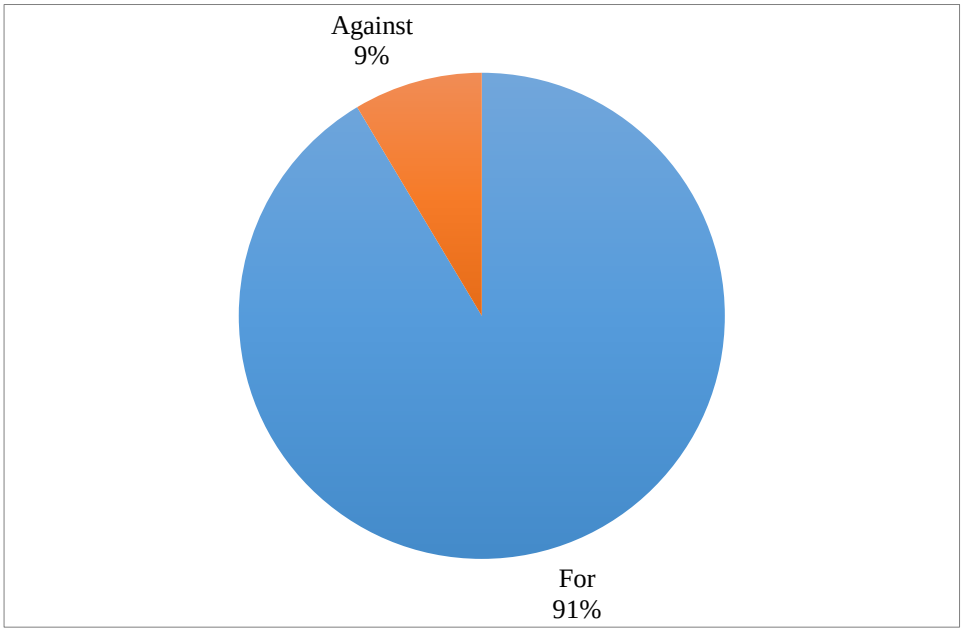
Of the 335 articles in the total random sample, thirty-five expressed an opinion on the topic of developing a new nuclear doctrine, more than double the number for the previous nuclear policy question.

Figure 6: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Developing New Nuclear Doctrine



The greater number of articles on this policy question signals an increased interest by strategic analysts in nuclear affairs following the tests. This discourse was characterised by a widespread acceptance that the tests had inaugurated a new nuclear environment for India, and that a new doctrine was required to officially define the role of an overt Indian nuclear force in its security and diplomacy. A vast majority of analysts agreed with the opinion that a new doctrine should be developed, as shown below.

Figure 7: Balance of Discourse on Developing New Nuclear Doctrine



The scale of this consensus in the discourse in favour of a new doctrine further illustrates the degree of pressure on the government to follow this course. A policy pronouncement was delivered by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in the Indian Parliament on May 27, 1998, outlining in vague terms: a general appreciation for the notion of nuclear restraint; that India was unlikely to conduct tests again in the near future; and that it was willing to discuss potential no-first-use pacts with other states. However, the paucity of these statements generated demands within the discourse for India to go further and develop a full nuclear doctrine, and replace the ambiguity in the above policy thoughts with more specificity.

3.3 Attitude Score

The average attitude score for articles discussing a new nuclear doctrine was **-0.57**. With articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed from this calculation, leaving only those coded as '1' or '-1', for maximalist and pro-restraint views respectively, the attitude score becomes **-0.66.** This is firmly positioned in the restraint end of the opinion spectrum, more so than the attitude score of **-0.18** for articles discussing new nuclear tests. This may seem paradoxical given that Indian analysts were now primarily

considering how best to field a nuclear arsenal. However, the elevated threat perception and sense of India at the mercy of external forces was reduced, and the discourse now shifted to a greater domestic focus as policy questions now revolved around how to domestically develop a nuclear doctrine redolent of Indian values.

With the perception that the government had taken measures to mitigate the pressing external threats felt in the previous context through announcing an overt nuclear capability, the necessity for this new capability to be guided from the outset by political restraint measures now became the prime concern in the discourse. It is through this process that a testing round inculcated greater entrenchment of the norm of restraint in the discourse.

3.4 Polarisation of Debate

The polarisation index for discourse on a prospective new nuclear doctrine was **0.74**. With articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed from this calculation, leaving only those coded as '1' or '-1', for maximalist and pro-restraint views respectively, the polarisation index becomes **0.76.** This indicates that the discourse was less polarised than for that concerning a new testing round, **0.85**. This shift away from polarisation and toward consensus further highlights the greater prevalence of restraint as the dominant norm in this particular policy discourse.

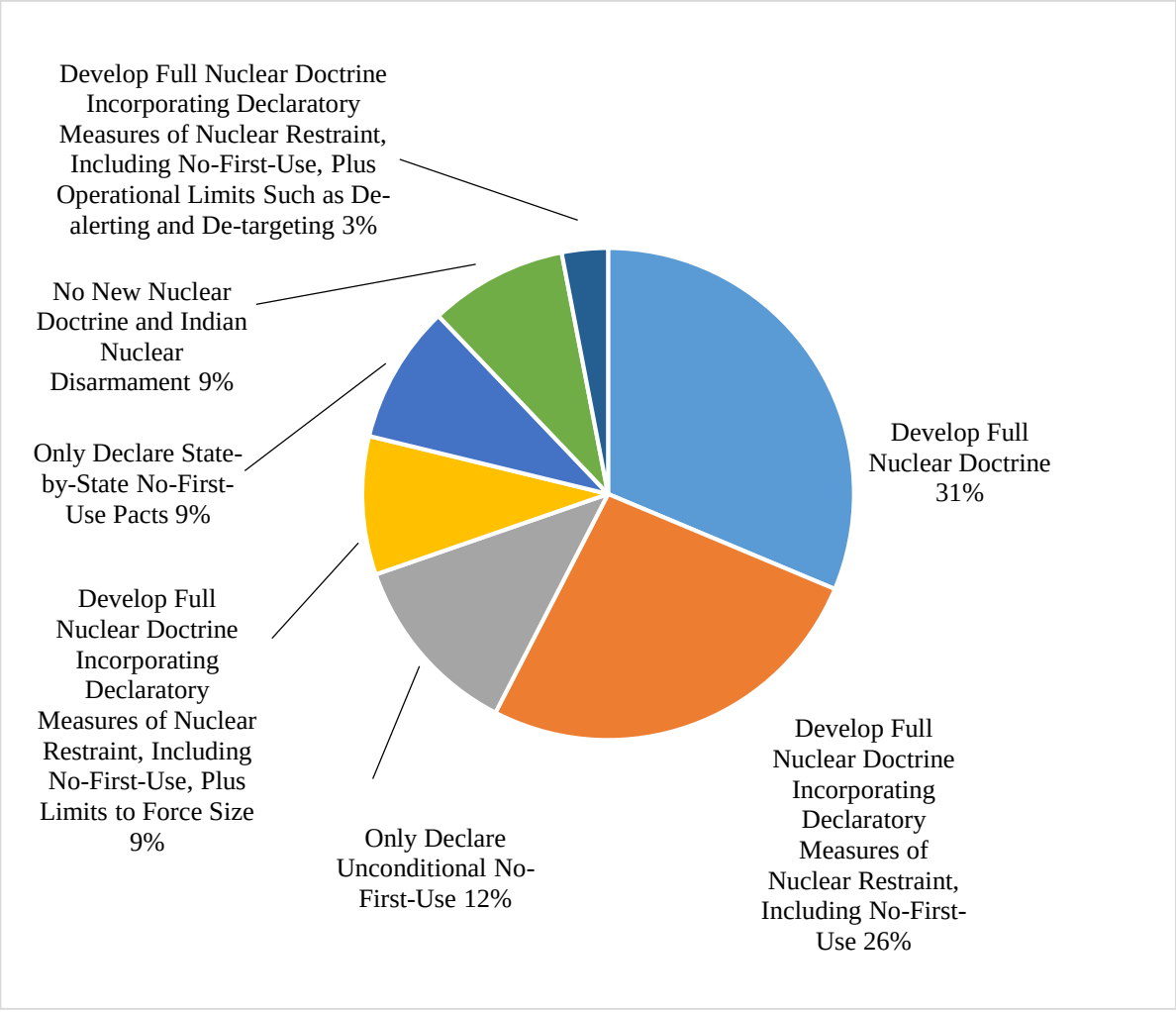
The focus of analysts in recommending restraint measures as essential elements of the new doctrine becomes especially clear with respect to the specific policy options promoted in the discourse, which we will now turn to.

3.5 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

When examining the balance of support for policy options promoted in the discourse on a prospective new doctrine, particularly striking are: the sense of a new nuclear context wrought by the tests; the perceived nature of the overt nuclear arsenal as a reality to be dealt with rather than a reversible decision; and the resulting reduction in support for the previous

nuclear opacity approach. Recommendations that no nuclear doctrine be developed and that elements of the previous opacity policy should be reinstated accounted for just 9% of policy advocacy in the discourse. The remaining substantial majority focused on different policies to be included in a new nuclear doctrine.

Figure 8: Policy Options Promoted in Discourse on New Nuclear Doctrine



Option 1: Develop Full Nuclear Doctrine (31%)

Authors making this argument mainly consisted of editors, journalists and former ambassadors aligned with the Congress party, although there was one contribution by a defence scholar close to the BJP. Commentators supporting this option argued that India

should proceed to develop a full nuclear doctrine in the wake of the nuclear tests. However, the articles refrained from further detailing the policies and guidelines that the doctrine should contain. The principle that a doctrine should be developed was the main point these authors sought to impress, as shown below:

> *"…even today there is no established national consensus on whether India should deploy nuclear weapons…Till a national debate establishes a consensus on a nuclear doctrine, the Vajpayee government would do well to freeze the country's nuclear programme."*[103]

Indeed, the necessity of an official exercise to clarify Indian nuclear policy and more credibly defend India's reputation as a non-aggressive rising power was emphasised by an *Indian Express* editorial:

> *"Vajpayee's greatest challenge would be to ensure that his professed (peaceful) views get translated into state policy. There are several hurdles in realising this, not the least of which is the fact that today there are at least half a dozen voices speaking at cross purposes."*[104]

One author, K. Subrahmanyam, reiterated this point in the wake of a conference he had attended in the United States discussing the tests. Possessing the bomb, but not a framework of political guidelines and strategic thought to channel its development undermined the purpose of nuclearisation in developing great-power defence capabilities to safeguard its interests:

> *"Unfortunately, there has not been enough team effort in India after the nuclear tests to formulate a comprehensive view on the post-Pokhran world and an integrated framework of security and disarmament policies. In the absence of the evolution of such a policy for which the leadership has to come from the government, the track II*

[103] Bharat Bhushan, "No Clear Govt. Stand on Nuclear Doctrine", Hindustan Times, May 22, 1998.

[104] Editorial, "Time to Cool Down", Indian Express, May 22, 1998.

diplomacy between Americans and Indians will result in interactions in which there will be a coherent US view but only fragmented Indian ones."[105]

As we can see above, these articles preferred to issue recommendations on the need for a doctrine, rather than its specific content. Indeed, the inherent inclusiveness of this policy option, in creating an umbrella within which any pro-doctrine argument could sit, accounts for its status as the most popular in the discourse. Vague principles of national resolve and clarity in official communications are hard to disagree with. However, several of the next most popular policy options considered potential doctrinal terms in greater detail, with the second most popular option most closely resembling the doctrine issued in 1999.

Commentators advancing these arguments mainly consisted of pro-Congress editors and former ambassadors. However, they also included two editorials by the *Times of India* and *Indian Express* and a column by a defence scholar close to the BJP. This reflected an overall support base rather leaning toward the Congress party in the political spectrum.

Option 2: Develop Full Nuclear Doctrine Incorporating Declaratory Measures of Nuclear Restraint, Including No-First-Use (26%)

Articles in this category went beyond advocating that a doctrine be developed, and sought to imagine in greater detail the values and guidelines that should be embedded in the new doctrine. Authors agreed that the doctrine should be characterised by a theme of nuclear restraint, and argued that it should include a formal commitment to a no-first-use policy to demonstrate the limited and defensive role for nuclear weapons in Indian strategy. Articles frequently sought to situate these arguments as emanating both from a perceived Indian affinity for strategic restraint, and a more responsible and sober perspective on nuclear weapons that had learned from the mistakes made by Western powers in developing maximal nuclear policies with excessively large and diversified nuclear arsenals. These sentiments are well encapsulated in the passage below:

[105] K. Subrahmanyam, "Fragmented View: Focus on Nuclear Policy", Times of India, November 9, 1998.

"Therefore there are very significant risks of this country not independently thinking through empirically our own nuclear doctrine and creatively using it to advance the cause of disarmament and peace and stability in the Asian region. Nuclear weapons are only needed to deter nuclear blackmail and for retaliation in the extremely unlikely event of its use. Therefore the no-first-use doctrine and not the NATO type of ultimate defence would fit in better with Indian civilisational tradition."[106]

This comment highlights a driving trend in the discourse on a new nuclear doctrine – that it should be developed indigenously, using indigenous concepts as far as possible to make it fully reflective of a uniquely Indian perspective on nuclear and strategic issues. This need to express a view partly accounts for the imperative in the discourse to develop a doctrine in the first place, and also to continue India's tradition in global politics of seeking a morally superior position to that of the established Western powers.

No-first-use became the touchstone policy around which these sentiments were organised. Arguments in this category drew from the strong norm of restraint visible in the discourse, forcefully arguing that adopting a no-first-use policy would most clearly express the Indian commitment to nuclear restraint, along with the desirable political signals to Western powers of nuclear moral superiority and to domestic audiences of civilisational legitimacy. An example of the perceived need to demonstrate India's superior moral education was provided by Jasjit Singh:

"While moving towards possessing a credible nuclear deterrent, it is important that the doctrine for such a deterrent should be articulated unambigously…There can be no justification - moral, political or military - even to contemplate using nuclear weapons first, under any circumstances. The only purpose of India's nuclear deterrent should be to deter the possible use and threat of use of nuclear weapons against it."[107]

However, these articles still left unanswered other questions surrounding the new Indian nuclear force and the meaning of restraint. Should restraint extend to detailing limits on

[106] Editorial, "Bringing up the Bomb", Times of India, May 20, 1998.

[107] Jasjit Singh, "The New Challenges", Frontline, June 5, 1998.

nuclear force size and destructive capability, as well as use of weapons? This question was left unanswered, with authors in this category feeling that the no-first-use policy was bold enough in demonstrating restraint to suffice. A *Times of India* editorial made this point, explaining that the requirement was for India to communicate the meaning of a no-first-use policy and its overarching theme of restraint to the world, rather than worry about further detail at this stage:

> *"In particular, there is a need to counter the propaganda which looks at the Indian situation in the familiar western nuclear theological context, raises scares, and creates doubts on the basis of inappropriate extrapolations of western strategic traditions to our situation…Countering this virulent disinformation campaign will contribute significantly to the promotion of a national consensus and help to mobilise support for the government's basic nuclear doctrine of no-first-use and minimum deterrence."*[108]

Authors in this category were mainly numerous editorials in the mass broadsheets *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express* and *Times of India*, plus multiple columns by K. Subrahmanyam, India's foremost defence intellectual. However, this camp also included to a lesser extent contributions by a few pro-Congress journalists and politicians, and by a retired air force official. The constitution of this camp therefore suggested more broad-based and centrist political support than the first option.

Option 3: Only Declare Unconditional No-First-Use (12%)

Articles in this category sought a different approach, agreeing with the importance of no-first-use in Option 2 but emphasising its stature to the extent that declaring an unconditional no-first-use policy by itself, as the most important part of the new Indian nuclear policy, would suffice in terms of doctrinal development. The symbolic importance of no-first-use as the foundational concept of Indian nuclear restraint is signified by the weight assigned to it in the comment below:

[108] Editorial, "Call for Consensus", Times of India, December 12, 1998.

"Like a latter-day Bhasmasura seduced by the nuclear doctrines and hegemonism of the big powers, the BJP seems intent on imitating them…While India certainly should not be the subject of nuclear blackmail, by the same token it must not similarly threaten - or even appear to threaten - others...The BJP's prevarication on unconditional no-first-use is certainly not a good omen."[109]

This argument conveys a sense that proclaiming unconditional no-first-use in and of itself would be crossing a Rubicon, and the enactment of this policy the most critical test of the ability of the Indian government to articulate a restrained nuclear policy with the necessary differences from those of the Western nuclear powers.

A *Times of India* editorial referred to Vajpayee's no-first-use declaration in the Indian Parliament in August 1998 as a doctrine in itself, applauding this as the most important element in clarifying India's nuclear thinking:

"...Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee finally announced a unilateral and unqualified declaration that India would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. This declaration will certainly help allay the fears of many in India and abroad about this government's decision to exercise the nuclear option."[110]

A third contribution to this argument was made by Arundhati Ghose, a former Congress ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. Her experiences in leading India's ultimately unsuccessful negotiations regarding the CTBT text created scepticism about the value of Indian willingness to secure international deals on nuclear policy matters. If India wished to advance a no-first-use policy, there was accordingly little point waiting for the right conditions for a bilateral or multilateral no-first-use pact as a precondition, Ghose claimed:

"...we should take a 'no first use' position unilaterally. We need not go for a bilateral or collective bargain."[111]

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[109] Siddharth Varadarajan, "A Nuclear Lesson from Bhasmasura", Times of India, May 28, 1998.

[110] Editorial, "Pluses and Minuses", Times of India, August 8, 1998.

[111] N. Ram, "India Must Say 'No' to CTBT and FMCT (Interview with Arundhati Ghose)", Frontline, July 3, 1998.

Articles in this group were principally authored by Ghose and a pro-Congress editor, although there was also a contribution by K. Subrahmanyam and a *Times of India* editorial. This suggested a slight leaning toward Congress sentiments among this group, as well as a reduced popularity of this policy option in its numerical strength comparative to others.

Option 4: Develop Full Nuclear Doctrine Incorporating Declaratory Measures of Nuclear Restraint, Including No-First-Use, Plus Limits to Force Size (9%)

Articles in this category agreed with Option 2 that a fully articulated nuclear doctrine was required, including but not merely a proclamation of unconditional no-first-use, and should be developed to the extent of including determinations of the eventual nuclear force size. This differed from the other policy options in the discourse in advocating that nuclear restraint also required explicit force size limits. This was principally framed as a natural part of the process of establishing no-first-use and other measures of restraint in the emerging doctrine:

> *"Now, with an overt, enhanced, sophisticated and demonstrated tactical and strategic capability, it has converted this capacity to one of minimum credible deterrence…The government will need to spell out the nuclear policy how strategic deterrence will fit into the national security framework. A determination will have to be made of the size of the nuclear stockpile and the nature of delivery systems."*[112]

A second article reiterated this imperative, emphasising that the government explicitly recognise and focus on developing those nuclear options essential for secure second-strike nuclear deterrence, and rule out other nuclear projects that would be redundant or inconsistent with this objective:

> *"India must voluntarily foreclose the option to employ tactical nuclear weapons. Any counterforce nuclear targeting by an adversary in the tactical domain should not warrant only a response of proportionality. A pre-declared policy of retaliation at*

[112] Ashok Mehta, "Preparing for a Nuclear Future", Hindustan Times, June 19, 1998.

the strategic level must form part of the nuclear doctrine and its command and control dimensions."[113]

The small proportion of articles that viewed nuclear force size limits as necessary elements for the doctrine highlights the greater comparative importance assigned to promoting no-first-use in the discourse. That the majority of articles refrained from mentioning restraint in nuclear force structuring or from calculating numerical limits illustrates the overriding interest in the discourse in symbolic and political rather than operational aspects of the new doctrine. These arguments were made by a pro-nuclear defence scholar, as well as two retired military officials.

Option 5: Only Declare State-by-State No-First-Use Pacts (9%)

This locus of opinion was similar to Option 3 in suggesting that a no-first-use policy in itself was sufficient for a new doctrine, but sought to leverage Indian interest in no-first-use as a carrot only to be granted to states agreeing a security pact with it. Proclaiming unconditional, unilateral no-first-use would remove its value as a bargaining chip in India's external relations. In particular, implementing no-first-use through this route could offer greater certitude regarding the intentions and capabilities of rivals, of which Pakistan was the most desired candidate:

"If India does not want outside intervention, bilateral assurances with Pakistan will need to be bolstered by guarantees credible to the other side. A no-first-use pact, for instance, can be reinforced by arrangements for mutual inspection."[114]

A second form of this argument highlighted the opportunity for India to capitalise on the tests in asserting regional leadership. This more ambitiously recommended that New Delhi take the lead in securing new terms for its nuclear relations with Asian neighbours, thus demonstrating its commitment to nuclear restraint as well as its rising power status:

[113] Kapil Kak, "Strategic Template for Nuclear India", Times of India, August 11, 1998.

[114] Ajit Bhattacharjea, "The Price of Folly", Hindustan Times, June 17, 1998.

"...India should invite a summit of Asian countries where Russia, China and Pakistan should be invited. These countries should agree to sign an agreement of no-first-use of nuclear weapons".[115]

These articles were authored by a pro-Congress editor and politician, as well as a retired colonel. Similar to Option 3, this suggests a relatively small support base for these arguments, and one which leaned toward the Congress party as opposed to the ruling BJP.

Option 6: No Nuclear Doctrine and Indian Nuclear Disarmament (9%)

This strand of opinion was the only one to explicitly reject the notion that a new nuclear doctrine was necessary. Believing that nuclear disarmament was the only moral and strategically wise course for India to follow, these arguments sought to contest the notion that the 1998 tests had irreversibly inaugurated a post-opacity overt nuclear status for India, and urged dismantlement of India's nuclear weapons capabilities to prevent such a perceived blunder occurring again. They opposed the entire direction of the government's nuclear policy:

"The BJP-led government's attempted nuclear weaponisation must be rolled back through concerted peace-oriented and democratic political opposition, which also means determined public pressure and action. The Pokhran and Chagai nuclear explosions cannot be undone, but nuclear weaponisation in India and Pakistan can be."[116]

The uncompromising force of this argument did not yield to the political difficulty of reversing the steps that had been taken. One commentator even outlined the sequential steps for this end to be achieved, including halting and dismantling all weaponisation programmes, then passing an act of Parliament to prevent their reactivation. This legislative process would also shed daylight on potential future nuclear machinations by elected decisionmakers and defence bureaucratic agencies:

[115] Col. P.K. Vasudeva (retd.), "Moot a No-First-Use Agreement", Indian Express, May 18, 1998.

[116] N. Ram, "Getting off the Tiger", Frontline, October 9, 1998.

"Any attempt to return to weaponisation would be subject to some degree of parliamentary supervision."[117]

However, it is notable that pro-disarmament arguments now occupied far less of a proportion of opinion than in the pre-test discourse, accounting for 9% of opinion compared with 18% previously. This signifies the persistence of a pro-disarmament constituency in the discourse, but one that stood against a general trend of acceptance among analysts that the tests were a fact to be built upon rather than reversed. Commentators making these arguments were aligned with leftist/communist and anti-nuclear/peace campaigner wings of Indian politics, and heavily critical of most policies of the BJP government in general.

Option 7: Develop Full Nuclear Doctrine Incorporating Declaratory Measures of Nuclear Restraint, Including No-First-Use, plus Operational Limits such as De-Alerting and De-Targeting (3%)

The one article advocating this particular point, a *Times of India* editorial, agreed with Option 2, but rather than focusing greater detailed analysis on nuclear force size as in Option 4, sought instead to explore the question of implementing restraint through management of nuclear force capabilities:

"India has to think through its own doctrine and command and control structure independently...Non-deployed systems, detargeted, dealerted with warheads and launchers kept apart and nuclear cores and the rest of the weapons assemblies separated with the full infrastructure to put them together at very short notice will not only assure accident proof safety they are in conformity with a no-first-use doctrine."[118]

Removing nuclear arsenals from "hair-trigger alert", meaning emphasising rapidity of nuclear response over inherent risks of accidental launch, was a popular recommendation for nuclear

[117] T. Jayaraman, "A Destabilising Misadventure", Frontline, February 26, 1999.

[118] Editorial, "Showing the Way", Times of India, June 22, 1998.

risk reduction in contemporary global nonproliferation discourse.[119] Like Option 4, which advocated limits to force size, this attempt to extend restraint into operational aspects of the nuclear force aside from no-first-use was notable in its more detailed analysis of nuclear force possibilities under the new doctrine. However, also like Option 4, the specific policy recommendation made did not enjoy wider consensus in the discourse. The overall discursive opinion instead concentrated in the greatest majority around the general principle that a new doctrine be developed, and then with the second largest concentration that the doctrine feature a no-first-use commitment as its key characteristic.

3.6 Selecting an Option

The government selected to develop a new nuclear doctrine, in line with the 91% of discourse advocating this course of action. In December 1998, it convened a National Security Advisory Board, consisting of retired officials, academics and strategic analysts, to formulate a "draft" nuclear doctrine. However, the presentation of the doctrine by National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra in August 1999 has led this "draft" document to be viewed by domestic and international analysts of Indian nuclear policy as enjoying an official imprimatur.[120]

Moving to the level of specific policy options recommended, the content of the doctrine most closely resembled the second most popular option in the discourse: Option 2, to develop a full nuclear doctrine incorporating declaratory measures of nuclear restraint, including no-first-use.[121] The decision therefore again correlated with a recommended option in the discourse,

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[119] See, for example, Bruce G. Blair, Harold A. Feiveson and Frank N. von Hippel, "Taking Nuclear Weapons off Hair-Trigger Alert", Scientific American Vol. 277 No. 5 (November 1997) pp. 74-81.

[120] P.R. Chari, "India's Nuclear Doctrine: Confused Ambitions", Nonproliferation Review Vol. 7 No. 3 (Fall-Winter 2000), pp. 126-127; Editors, "India Draft Nuclear Doctrine", Disarmament Diplomacy Issue 39 (July-August 1999), available at http://www.acronym.org.uk/39draft.htm

[121] The text of the doctrine is available at Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs. *Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine*, August 17, 1999, available at http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/Draft+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine

although in this instance it was the second most popular option, rather than the most popular as with the discourse on prospective new nuclear tests.

The doctrine established its conformity with Option 2 with a lengthy announcement of a no-first-use policy as demonstrative of Indian nuclear restraint, a theme we previously discerned in the discourse on a new nuclear doctrine. Paragraph 2.4 served as the centrepiece statement in the doctrine's discussion of no-first-use:

> *"The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any State or entity against India and its forces. India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike, but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail."*[122]

The no-first-use policy was thus established unconditionally and unilaterally through promulgation of the doctrine, rather than separately through interstate pacts as promoted through Option 6.

The doctrine also sought to locate no-first-use as demonstrative of an overall new Indian approach of seeking "credible minimum deterrence". This phrase sought to communicate that India would forswear maximal nuclear policies for their own sake, and instead build an arsenal sufficient to deter adversaries. The modifier "credible" was added to the term "minimum deterrence" to impress that the shape and size of the arsenal would be flexible and determined by the changing nuclear environment surrounding India. The emergence of this principle in the doctrine highlights continuity with the theme in the discourse over both policy questions thus far, of seeking a way to demonstrate restraint in Indian nuclear policy in the effort to build a credible nuclear capability.

Following from this principle of credible minimum deterrence, the doctrine authors rejected the proposal of Option 4 (to include specific limits to nuclear force size). The belief in the doctrine that India should retain flexibility in determining its nuclear force posture as determined by the nuclear strategic context it confronted – the reason why the term is "credible minimum deterrence" and not "minimum deterrence" – motivated against including

[122] Paragraph 2.4, *Indian Nuclear Doctrine*.

such self-imposed limits. The doctrine also refrained from any mention of potential de-alerting or de-targeting of the nuclear force as another restraint measure, as recommended by Option 7. The doctrine instead framed the eventual force size as being designed to follow from the restraint principles it established:

> *"Details of policy and strategy concerning force structures, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will flow from this framework and will be laid down separately and kept under constant review."*[123]

However, the doctrine also interestingly announced that a nuclear triad – of land, sea and air forces – was the most appropriate posture to develop.[124] While this suggestion occasionally surfaced in the discourse, it was framed as part of broader arguments about the declaratory principles to underpin the nuclear force.[125] It is notable that the discourse indeed was far more interested in declaratory principles than matters of operational design.

To summarise, there is again a clear correlation between the weight of opinion in the discourse and the policy selected. In developing a new nuclear doctrine, the government decision aligned with the option promoted by the majority in discourse. Delving to the level of specific policy options recommended, the government policy resembled the second most popular policy option, highlighting that the decision again correlates with the policy options promoted in the discourse. The addition of the detail of credible minimum deterrence further reflects the underlying perceived need, visible in the discourse, for India to situate its new nuclear policy in an overall framework of nuclear restraint.

The other main detail added in the doctrine, that of the nuclear triad, reflects an effort to supply operational detail that was largely missing in the discourse's concentration on declaratory norms. Compared to the testing decision, the more complex decision of the new doctrine and the principles and policies to populate it therefore involves more nuances in its relationship with the discourse. However, the decision to develop a doctrine, and the majority of its content, still closely correlated with the weight of opinion within the discourse.

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[123] Paragraph 1.6, *Indian Nuclear Doctrine*.

[124] Paragraph 3.1, *Indian Nuclear Doctrine*.

[125] Vasudeva, "Moot a No-First-Use Agreement".

Option 2 also represented the policy proposal with the broadest centrist base in the political spectrum, enjoying multiple consensus editorials in the *Hindustan Times, Indian Express* and *Times of India*, as well as several articles by centrist defence analyst K. Subrahmanyam, in its stable. While Option 1 was numerically more popular, its proponents were more likely to be closer to Congress and less supportive of the BJP government. The other options were also mainly promoted by pro-Congress authors or enjoyed far less numerical popularity than Options 1 or 2. Similar to the first decision, this suggests that the position of authors as being close to the BJP or at least demonstrating a majority position in the political "centre" of discourse, as demonstrated by these multiple mass broadsheet editorials, heightened the chances of their policy option correlating with the ultimate government decision.

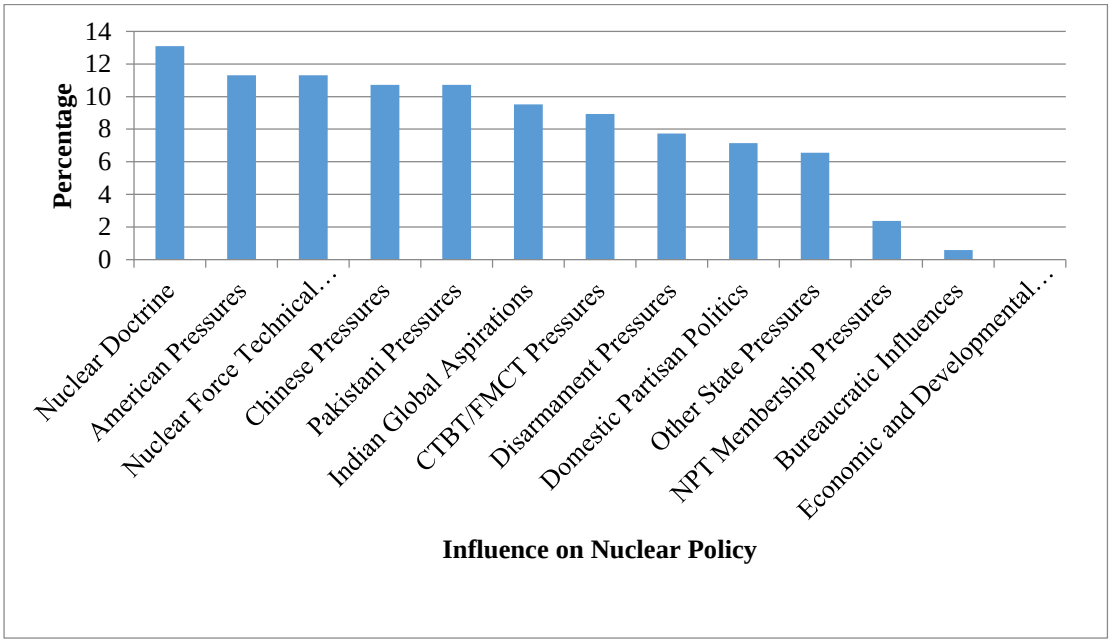
We will now look at the influences on this decision in the discourse, to see their effects, ranking and whether there was notable change in this from the previous decision on tests.

3.7 Issues Cited in Discourse on New Doctrine

The post-test transition of the discourse toward imagining a new Indian nuclear policy featured a shift toward domestic issues in those most commonly cited in the discourse. Whereas the top four issues cited in the previous discourse on new tests had all been external and predominantly state-centric, now the top four issues featured two that were domestic: Nuclear Doctrine and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements.

This reflects two major shifts in the discourse. Firstly, the conduct of nuclear tests lessened the sense of heightened external threat discernable in the discourse prior to the tests. A second shift was the realisation that the task was now to consider how best to formulate an authentically Indian nuclear policy, a process that required greater discussion of internal over external factors. The ranking of salient influences in the discourse on a new nuclear doctrine is illustrated below.

Figure 9: Issues Cited in Discourse on New Doctrine



Notable changes in this ranking from that for the previous list of salient issues on the question of new nuclear tests include, most prominently, the jump of Nuclear Doctrine from tenth previously to first here, and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements from ninth previously to joint second here. This signifies the newly enlarged relevance of these two issues to the specific policy question at hand. The retention of American Pressures as the second most cited influence, the same as in the previous list, highlights its continued prominence in shaping Indian nuclear policy, a point that becomes more dramatic as Pakistani Pressures and Chinese Pressures dropped here from first and third previously to joint fourth. Economic and Developmental Issues were not cited at all in the discourse, reflecting the widespread assumption that the emergence of an overt Indian nuclear arsenal wrought by the tests was here to stay, and that arguments over economic and social development opportunity costs vis-à-vis weapons development were now accordingly settled.

We will now look at the framing of each issue in the discourse regarding the question of a new nuclear doctrine. Although there is variation between the position of articles citing each influence on the opinion spectrum below, the greater entrenchment of pro-restraint arguments is further visible by the position of all these citations of influences on the restraint end of the spectrum.

Table 6: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on New Nuclear Doctrine

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
Other State Pressures	-0.18
Disarmament Pressures	-0.46
Indian Global Aspirations	-0.5
NPT Membership Pressures	-0.5
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	-0.53
Chinese Pressures	-0.55
Average Attitude Score for All Articles Expressing Opinion on New Nuclear Doctrine	*-0.57*
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.58
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.59
American Pressures	-0.63
Pakistani Pressures	-0.66
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-0.68
Bureaucratic Influences	-1
Economic and Developmental Needs	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*

A second table is provided below with articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed. This leaves only articles coded as'-1' or '1,' for pro-restraint and maximalist views respectively. The exclusion of '0' articles has the effect of moving every attitude score for a perceived influence on nuclear policy further into the pro-restraint column.

Table 7: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on New Nuclear Doctrine, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score***
Other State Pressures	-0.2
Disarmament Pressures	-0.5
NPT Membership Pressures	-0.5
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	-0.57
Indian Global Aspirations	-0.57
Chinese Pressures	-0.62
American Pressures	-0.66
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on New Nuclear Doctrine	*-0.66*
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.68
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-0.68
Pakistani Pressures	-0.75
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.77
Bureaucratic Influences	-1
Economic and Developmental Needs	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

The position of Nuclear Doctrine as the most cited influence in the discourse reflected the pervasive sense in the discourse that the old doctrine of opacity had to be seen as part of a historical context that had now passed following the nuclear tests; that a new doctrine was required; and that these doctrinal aspects were now the most salient issue confronting Indian nuclear policy.

Documenting the flaws of the previous opacity doctrine, and the opportunity that the tests presented to develop a more appropriate approach for India's security needs, was a popular early response by commentators in the wake of the 1998 tests. Indeed, the urgency assigned

to the task of doctrinal development, portraying it as the most pressing near-term security challenge India faced, was a common theme in these articles.[126]

These frequently emphasised integrating restraint measures expressed as a reason for developing a doctrine. This would clarify to domestic and international audiences that the tests and India's following nuclear approach were not intended to give hawkish signals, but were a necessary element of a new policy of developing a small, defensive nuclear deterrent. This visible influence of the restraint norm is also signalled by the average attitude score of -0.59 of articles citing Nuclear Doctrine as an influence.

Issue: American Pressures

As the joint second most-cited influence on nuclear policy, the American presence in the Indian nuclear discourse was multifaceted, in forms such as: the American nuclear doctrine as a flawed model for the Indian nuclear doctrine to distinguish itself against; the post-test American efforts to impose sanctions upon India while demanding that New Delhi limit its nuclear aspirations; and the continuing desire in the discourse for India to find a modus vivendi for good relations with the United States that nevertheless protected India's ability to conduct an independent foreign policy.

The American nuclear force policy, portrayed in Indian discourse as a caricature of a maximal nuclear policy, was often cited as failed thinking that the Indian doctrine must not emulate. The Indian doctrine would instead demonstrate an enlightened nuclear approach based upon restraint and the limited actual utility of nuclear weapons, in deliberate contrast to the outdated American approach of a massive arsenal prepared for immediate use in any context.[127]

The second main representation of American influence in the discourse was the vociferous reaction by Washington to the tests. The United States imposed unilateral trade and

[126] G.S. Bhargaya, "Pokhran II Should End Nukes Mania", Times of India, May 15, 1998; K. Subrahmanyam, "Educate India in Nuclear Strategy", Times of India, May 22, 1998.

[127] Editorial, "Showing the Way", Times of India, June 22, 1998.

technology sanctions; sought a multilateral coalition to extend these measures; dispatched a senior official, Strobe Talbott, to personally pressure the Indian government to limit its nuclear development plans; and even agreed a joint statement with China, India's archenemy, condemning the tests. Responses to this pressure in the discourse mainly involved arguments that India stand its ground and calmly explain through a new doctrine the strategic context that had led to overt nuclearisation and its following defensive nuclear posture. The lack of a doctrine and official Indian narrative explaining its position, it was felt, created room for Washington and other malign actors to misconstrue the Indian position.[128]

For an improved relationship with Washington to be established, however, it was imperative in the discourse that India make clear its non-negotiable right to develop a nuclear force as it saw fit. The emphasis in the discourse that a new doctrine was essential in this context of substantial American pressure, and that a doctrine characterised by restraint would be a superior document to the flawed and outdated nuclear thinking practiced in the United States, accounts for the average attitude score of -0.63 for this issue, strongly toward the restraint end of the opinion spectrum.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

The perceived conversion of India's nuclear "option" into the makings of an overt nuclear arsenal, and the broader range of possibilities in deciding the shape of its nuclear force following the technical advancements made by the successful tests, rose to the joint second most cited influence on nuclear policy in the discourse on a prospective new doctrine. The perception that the technical advancements had created new nuclear policy options for India was a notable aspect of the discourse.[129] There was substantial confidence among the analysts that the tests were sufficient in their range of devices to not require additional testing rounds, and that the task of nuclear policy was now to politically situate the tests in a new doctrine.[130] The effect of the new technical options now available to India therefore served in the discourse as a driver for India to utilise these in developing a new doctrine. That the doctrine

[128] Harvey Stockwin, "India Needs to Befriend the Eagle to Tame the Dragon", Times of India, July 5, 1998.

[129] Ashok Mehta, "Preparing for a Nuclear Future", Hindustan Times, June 19, 1998.

[130] Jasjit Singh, "The New Challenges", Frontline, June 5, 1998.

should be animated by restraint measures accounts for the average attitude score of -0.68 for articles citing Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, again strongly weighted toward the restraint end of the opinion spectrum.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

China's status as one of India's two primary strategic rivals, and the likely adversary against much of which India's nuclear force would be directed, is reflected in its position as joint third most commonly cited issue alongside India's other rival, Pakistan. The doctrinal discussion on what form of nuclear force was required to deter thus often referred to deterring China. Chinese activities, after all, were a principal justification for the nuclear tests in the discourse and in official policy.[131]

China as the focal point of the Indian nuclear doctrine and post-test diplomacy was therefore a common theme in the discourse. Early advice to the government in an editorial following the tests emphasised the importance of winning Chinese support in efforts to limit sanctions and other hostile pressures against India.[132]

The role of China in serving as the likely target against which Indian nuclear forces should be modeled was also notable, but did not lead to arguments for maximal nuclear policies. One characteristic assessment prefigured the adoption of "credible minimum deterrence" thinking in the official doctrine, by recommending that *"even retaliating with a few nuclear warheads will create unacceptable costs for both (China and Pakistan)."*[133]

The average attitude score of -0.55 for authors citing Chinese activities as an influence, slightly above the overall average of -0.57, highlights the fact that China was viewed as a security threat; however, this only manifested itself in a slightly weaker position on the pro-

[131] Vasudeva, "Moot a No-First-Use Agreement". See also Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton listing the reasons for the tests, of which China was the first: "We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962". "Nuclear Anxiety; India's Letter to Clinton on the Nuclear Testing", New York Times, May 13, 1998.

[132] Editorial, "Time to Cool Down".

[133] Rajesh Rajgopalan, "For an Assured Retaliation", Hindustan Times, December 8, 1998.

restraint end of the opinion spectrum than other influences.

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Pakistan's own round of nuclear tests conducted at the Chagai site in late May 1998, mirroring India's own process of testing then announcing possession of an overt nuclear arsenal, was widely anticipated within Indian discourse. Despite the downturn in strategic relations that these nuclear blasts signified, analysts were often paradoxically optimistic that the tests introduced a new nuclear environment based upon mutual deterrence. This new context, they felt, would prove more conducive for peace talks as both security establishments realised the inherent unusability of the military instrument to press political advantage for fear of nuclear escalation. Commentators recommended that New Delhi seize this initiative in its diplomacy with Islamabad. The tendency of Islamabad to make veiled nuclear threats toward India to attract international attention to the Kashmir issue, in particular, would hopefully now be seen as an obsolete tactic.[134]

Indeed, the sense in the discourse that India's new nuclear doctrine should not dissuade this perceived excellent opportunity for Islamabad and New Delhi to build peace upon the stability of mutual nuclear deterrence, and that New Delhi should not let this opportunity to pass by, was striking.[135] The different perceptions of Pakistan and China in the discourse on a new doctrine therefore involved greater confidence that the new nuclear context brought peace closer with Pakistan but made relations with China still a case of tensions to be managed. This accounts for the greater emphasis on restraint in the average attitude score for Pakistan, at -0.66, compared to China, at -0.55.

[134] K. Subrahmanyam, "Kashmir 1948-1998: Countering Pak's Nuclear Blackmail", Times of India, June 26, 1998.

[135] Karan Singh, "Indo-Pak Road to Peace", Hindustan Times, July 11, 1998.

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

As the fourth most cited influence on nuclear policy, articles discussing Indian Global Aspirations mainly referred to the imperative that India develop the doctrine as a service to the world, educating other nuclear powers in how to develop a doctrine reflective of Indian civilisational values and promoting restraint rather than the inferior efforts propounded by those nuclear powers recognised under the NPT. Nuclear weapons, in the majority view of the discourse citing Indian global aspirations, would amplify India's voice in international affairs. These arguments also extended to a perceived need for India to issue a nuclear doctrine to demonstrate that it meant business; as one article advocated, *"...having declared itself a nuclear-weapons state, India has to start behaving like one".*[136]

However, the minority of the articles in the discourse opposing a new doctrine continued to utilise this issue to emphasise costs to India's international image by proceeding with nuclear weapons development. The reduced occurrence of these arguments, and the rapid degree to which India's new nuclear approach was integrated into previous narratives of India's morally faultless rise to global power, is striking. The average attitude score of -0.5, slightly above the average attitude score for the discourse on this policy question, signifies the substantial preference for nuclear restraint to validate this narrative.

Issue: CTBT/FMCT Pressures

The nuclear tests and the resulting pressure on India to clarify its nuclear intentions reawakened the question of India's potential accession to the CTBT and the FMCT. If the tests had provided India with enough technical data to proceed with weapons development and no further tests were required, as the DRDO and DAE affirmed, this removed a previous technical reason for India not to sign the CTBT. The genuine drive in the discourse for India to demonstrate nuclear restraint also coincided with renewed American pressure on India to sign the CTBT following the tests.

Articles citing the CTBT and FMCT regarding a new doctrine mainly limited themselves to

[136] Editorial, "Need for Openness", Hindustan Times, October 27, 1998.

arguing that the Indian government had to form a coherent position on these questions, rather than specifiying which way this decision should go. The risk of a government *"with at least half a dozen voices speaking at cross-purposes"* on the issue was more regularly emphasised than the costs and benefits of joining or abstaining from these regimes.[137]

While a minority of articles took positions for or against Indian accession to these treaties, the dominant framing of this issue was that India merely adopt a definite position as part of the clarity on its nuclear future to be introduced with the new doctrine. The average attitude score of -0.53, very close to the average score for discourse on a new doctrine, highlights the incorporation of these points made regarding the CTBT and FMCT as part of broader arguments for India to demonstrate nuclear restraint through development of a doctrine communicating this.

Issue: Disarmament Pressures

Articles citing Disarmament Pressures as an issue, the sixth most frequently cited, principally did so as part of framing the context of multilateral pressures India faced following the tests. There was a higher concentration of articles citing this issue that opposed a new doctrine, as these articles proposed Indian moves toward nuclear disarmament. However, the majority of articles cited this issue to rule it out as a realistic prospect for Indian nuclear policy following the tests.[138]

The principal citation of disarmament to refute multilateral pressures on India to disarm accounts for the average attitude score of -0.46 – the second least aligned to the restraint end of the spectrum, but still well identifiable as closer to pro-restraint than maximalist policies.

[137] Editorial, "Time to Cool Down".

[138] Singh, "The New Challenges".

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

Authors citing Domestic Partisan Politics as an influence on nuclear policy mainly emphasised the importance of involving the Indian parliament in collaborative efforts to draft a new nuclear doctrine. Involving the legislature, these arguments ran, would ensure the doctrine stood on a firmer foundation of domestic support when finalised, while strengthening the Indian government's hand in facing multilateral pressures by being able to present a united domestic front in favour of its position. This route could also improve parliamentary expertise in nuclear and strategic affairs.[139]

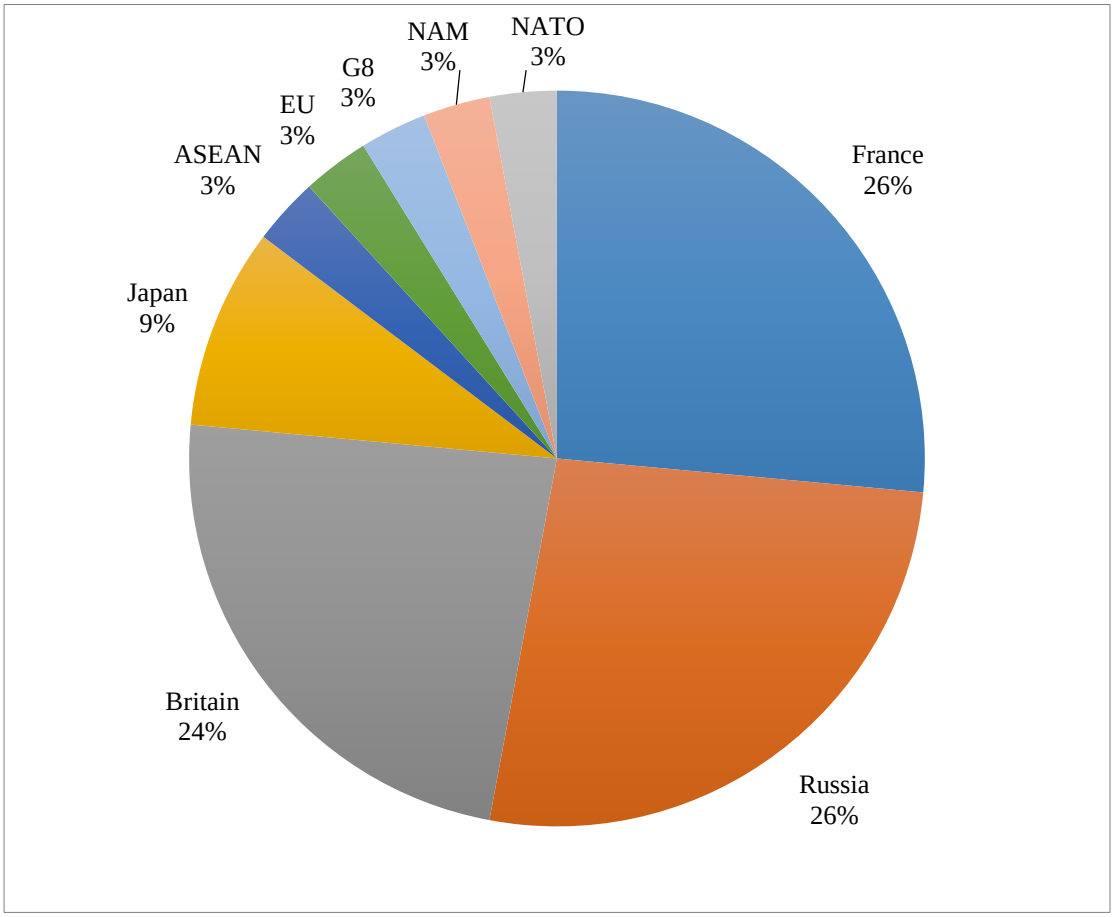
The average attitude score for articles discussing domestic partisan politics regarding a prospective new nuclear doctrine was -0.58, almost exactly the average attitude score for discourse on this policy question. This illustrates the deployment of Domestic Partisan Politics as an issue in the discourse to promote involving parliament so as to better entrench a new doctrine of nuclear restraint.

Issue: Other State Pressures

Articles citing other state influences, again predominantly France, Russia and Britain, mainly did so in the context of detailing the positions of the five nuclear weapons states under the NPT and framing these collectively as posing one united front to India. This was most commonly framed in order to argue that their nuclear doctrines were based upon maximalist strategies that an enlightened India would forsake, and that their opposition to an Indian overt deterrent was hypocritical given their own reliance on nuclear weapons for security. An illustration of the states identified in this category is provided below.

[139] Subrahmanyam, "Educate India in Nuclear Strategy".

Figure 10: Additional States Cited as Influences in Discourse on New Nuclear Doctrine



The other states and interstate groups mentioned here were principally cited in the form of documenting their opposition to the new Indian nuclear course as a pressure to resist, with the exception of ASEAN and the Non-aligned Movement, which avoided or downplayed criticism of Indian nuclear activities in their public statements. The framing of these states to bolster Indian resolve to pursue its independent nuclear course accounts for the average attitude score of -0.18, the least pro-restraint score of all issues cited in the discourse on a new nuclear doctrine.

Issue: NPT Membership Pressures

Similar to the framing regarding other state pressures as an issue, NPT Membership Pressures were cited by articles to argue for the flawed approach of the nuclear weapons states it recognised and the unviability and hypocrisy of the NPT-based nonproliferation regime as an

alternative route to developing an independent nuclear force and doctrine.[140] The average score of -0.5, very slightly above the average attitude score for all articles discussing a new doctrine, highlights the popularity of restraint as a guiding principle in the discourse; however, an different path to restraint than that promoted by the NPT would need to be found by India.

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

The one article citing bureaucratic influences on nuclear policy merely lauded the role of the defence agencies in supplying India with a credible nuclear capability through successful demonstration of several different nuclear devices. The article made this point in order to argue that, with questions regarding the technical backbone of the deterrent answered, the task was now to develop a nuclear doctrine.[141] As only one article cited this issue, its attitude score of -1 forms the average for this issue.

This signifies a continued potential underweighting of bureaucratic influences on nuclear policy. Government agencies, such as DRDO and the military, played advisory roles in official nuclear doctrinal debates. However, as these activities took place behind a wall of official secrecy, they were notably not highlighted here as influential in discourse on a new nuclear doctrine. This tendency could change toward later nuclear policy decisions as the likely bureaucratic impacts on nuclear policy became publicly known; or it could persist, suggesting a continual underweighting of bureaucratic effects as a characteristic of this analytical model.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

No articles cited this issue as an influence on Indian nuclear policy in discourse on a potential new nuclear doctrine, a stark contrast to its position as seventh most cited issue in the previous discourse concerning new nuclear tests. This signifies the changes in the discourse

[140] Ram, "India Must Say 'No' to CTBT and FMCT (Interview with Arundhati Ghose)".

[141] Singh, "The New Challenges".

following the test, and the majority view that the nuclear force was now here to stay, and not a hypothetical possibility that could be subject to abstract calculations balancing its costs against increased investment in economic and social development programmes.

3.8 Discourse on New Nuclear Doctrine: Conclusions

The policy decision on whether to develop a new nuclear doctrine in the wake of the tests again demonstrated a clear correlation with the strategic discourse on this issue. Unlike the earlier question regarding whether to conduct new nuclear tests, this policy decision correlated with the overall majority of opinion in the discourse, which supported development of a new doctrine by a great margin. Indeed, this majority was far more overwhelming than the more divided debate regarding new nuclear tests. There was a far greater consensus in the discourse in support of a new nuclear doctrine than for new nuclear tests, presenting a clearer case to the government that it should develop a new doctrine. At this decision level of for and against a doctrine, the government policy aligned with the choice recommended by the vast majority of opinion in the discourse.

Once this first decision had been made whether to develop a new nuclear doctrine or not, the specific content of the doctrine again correlated with a popular policy option promoted in the discourse. The eventual doctrine most closely resembled the second most popular policy option recommended: to develop a full nuclear doctrine incorporating declaratory measures of nuclear restraint, including a declaration of no-first-use. This policy option was supported by 26% of opinion in the discourse, slightly behind the 31% who merely argued for the need for a new doctrine without delving into questions regarding its preferred content. However, the importance of substantial support for a policy option in the discourse was demonstrated by this second most popular option correlating with government policy, with the other options only enjoying minority levels of support from 12% to 3% in the discourse.

The government therefore again constructed an option enjoying substantial support in the discourse, rather than for example constructing its own option with little identifiable precursors to it in the discourse. This illustrates the continued role of discourse as one among many inputs in the policymaking process. While this second case study highlighted that this pattern may not always be in the form of the most popular policy option in discourse

correlating with ultimate government policy, the successful policy option in this case was the second most popular.

In terms of the position of commentators supporting policy options on the political spectrum, there was not a clear cut pro-BJP group as with the discourse on nuclear policy tests. Proponents for India to develop a new nuclear doctrine, as the most popular policy option, mainly leaned toward supporting the opposition Congress party, although this camp also included a pro-BJP analyst. However, the policy option selected by government enjoyed a demonstrably broader support base. Its main proponents included multiple editorials by the mass broadsheets the *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express* and *Times of India*, reflecting the dominant consensus view of their editorial boards. It also included multiple columns by K. Subrahmanyam, the most influential Indian strategic thinker in public discourse. Retired military officials and a few pro-Congress authors completed this constellation. The government therefore selected the second most popular policy option promoted in discourse, and the option enjoying the broadest and most centrist political support, including by India's leading defence scholar.

The remaining policy options enjoyed at most only 12% support in the discourse, and were mostly supported by pro-Congress or leftist critics of the government. The policy with the support base potentially closest to the BJP, consisting of a pro-nuclear defence scholar and two retired military officials, formed only 9% of the balance of opinion in the discourse.

The norm of restraint continued to characterise the discourse concerning this new policy question. Indeed, this became even more pronounced following the tests, with the average attitude score of the discourse on the restraint/maximal nuclear policy spectrum now located further toward the restraint pole. This signified popular sentiments within the discourse for the government to demonstrate measures of nuclear restraint to change the hostile international context and sanctions India that faced following the tests, with a nuclear doctrine codifying elements of this restraint as the clearest way to do so.

The perceived security benefits and sense of assertion of Indian interests that the tests engendered was reflected in shifts in the balance of influences on Indian nuclear policy. Domestic influences now attained greater interest in the nuclear discourse. This was most prominently characterised by Nuclear Doctrine as an influence being elevated to the most

salient issue concerning nuclear policy in the discourse surrounding a prospective new nuclear doctrine, from from the tenth most salient issue in the discourse on new tests.

A second notable change in the hierarchy of salient issues was for a second domestic influence, that of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements. The potential role of nuclear technical advancements in changing Indian conceptions of the meaning and purpose of its nuclear force is one of the central research questions of our study. Technical advancements as an issue was now the joint second most cited influence on nuclear policy, compared to ninth in the discourse on new nuclear tests. This rising influence of nuclear technological developments was mainly manifested in demands that the government supply a credible nuclear technical backstop. This was to be developed through the exercise now demanded by the Indian nuclear discourse: to formulate a nuclear doctrine characterised by restraint to guide the political and military role of these nuclear options. This built upon the framing of this influence in the previous discourse, which emphasised the need for a small overt nuclear force. While this influence was rising in salience in strategic discourse, it was still viewed as requiring pro-restraint nuclear policies.

This second case study therefore demonstrated: a continuing correlation between popular policy options promoted in the strategic discourse and the eventual policy selected by government; a strengthening of the norm of restraint as an organising value of the discourse; and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements becoming more influential on nuclear policy as perceived by the discourse. We will now turn to the next policy question, regarding how India should respond to the Kargil crisis in which it soon unexpectedly found itself.

Chapter 4: Decision: 1999 Kargil War Crisis

4.1 Introduction

The previous nuclear decisions India had taken – conducting nuclear tests and issuing a draft nuclear doctrine – both primarily concerned declaratory as opposed to operational aspects of India's nuclear policy. The nuclear doctrine, through its articulation of a no-first-use policy, did provide greater clarity on India's nuclear threshold separating use of conventional from nuclear weapons. However, the doctrine still remained merely a text agreed by committee. In India's volatile regional environment, questions remained as to how its nuclear force would operate in the next regional conflict. While a coherent statement of the declaratory principles guiding use of the nuclear force had been outlined through the doctrine, the true existence of these principles had yet to be tested and validated through a major crisis. This crisis would come far sooner than decisionmakers in New Delhi had anticipated, just over a year after the May 1998 nuclear tests.

The nuclear tests had brought new Indian hopes for a final peace with Pakistan. Echoing the controversial "nuclear revolution" thesis famously advanced by Kenneth Waltz, strategic analysts argued that this peace could be built upon a mutual understanding that war between overt nuclear weapons states was no longer a viable option, and a negotiated peace was the only route forward for both Islamabad and New Delhi.[142]

These Indian sentiments were complemented by the familiar backdrop of international pressure for India and Pakistan to launch new peace talks incorporating nuclear risk reduction measures and a final agreement on the status of Kashmir. The United States and other powers impressed the need for India and Pakistan to demonstrate progress in improving their bilateral relations in order for sanctions to be lifted.

Finally, both governments were still fairly new in office, and their leaders wished a legacy that amounted to more than the mushroom clouds of Pokhran and Chagai. The scene was

[142] Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May be Better (Adelphi Paper No. 171)* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981); K. Subrahmanyam, "Peace at N-Point", Times of India, May 31, 1998; Siddharth Varadarajan, "The Bus Must Return with No-War Pact", Times of India, February 18, 1999.

therefore set for new bilateral peace efforts, undergirded by the new necessity of reducing the risk of conventional skirmishes escalating to the nuclear dimension.

These efforts culminated in the Lahore summit of February 1999, which still represents one of the high points of India-Pakistan relations today. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee took the first ride to inaugurate a new Delhi-Lahore bus service, and met Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif in Lahore for the summit. At the summit, there was a sense that the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation had broken the previous deadlocks and made a final peace possible. Vajpayee's keynote speech at the summit dinner affirmed:

> *"We have discussed those areas of (the) relationship on which we do not see eye to eye. This is only inevitable. As we seek to resolve issues, we have to be conscious that there is nothing which cannot be resolved through goodwill and direct dialogue. That is the only path."*[143]

For his own part, Sharif remarked that:

> *"Pakistan is interested in promoting confidence building measures in the nuclear and conventional field with the view to reducing the danger of conflict and leading to nuclear restraint and stabilisation. Neither Pakistan nor India has gained anything from the conflicts and tensions of the past 50 years."* [144]

This optimism was further reflected in the bilateral measures agreed at the summit. These included establishing bilateral notifications of missile tests and nuclear accidents; affirming their continued testing moratoriums; and committing to subsequent nuclear and political dialogues.[145] Some form of détente, or at least a more stable bilateral relationship, appeared to be within reach.

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[143] Sumita Kumar, "Indo-Pak Bus Diplomacy", Strategic Analysis, Vol. 23 Issue 1 (1999) p. 168.

[144] "Prime Minister's Remarks at the Pakistan-India Joint Press Conference, Lahore, February 21, 1999", available at http://www.stimson.org/research-pages/lahore-summit/

[145] *Lahore Declaration*, February 21, 1999, available at http://www.stimson.org/research-pages/lahore-summit/

While Sharif was entertaining Vajpayee, however, Pakistan's ambitious army chief, Pervez Musharraf, was entertaining different thoughts. A bitter survivor of the 1971 war which halved Pakistan, Musharraf held a different view of the effects of nuclear weapons on Pakistan's relations with India. In his reading, the fear in Islamabad and New Delhi of a major war leading to nuclear obliteration created room for smaller incursions to establish "facts on the ground". New Delhi's likely fear of the nuclear consequences inherent in any escalation would compel it to yield to Pakistani advances. Musharraf planned the first strike of this new strategy to take place in the Kargil sector of India-governed Kashmir.

On May 3, 1999, some Indian shepherds in Kargil reported suspicious movements by Pakistani militants to the Indian army. The army set up patrols, which estimated that up to one hundred militants had seized a tract 25km within the de facto Indian border. Following the discovery of Pakistan army identifications among dead militants, and the combat support provided by the regular army, New Delhi deduced that this was a full Pakistani military operation. The scale of the challenge became apparent with the Indian army's revision of the number of Pakistani forces involved to be 600-800 by May 25, and the deployment of the Indian air force to help evict them.

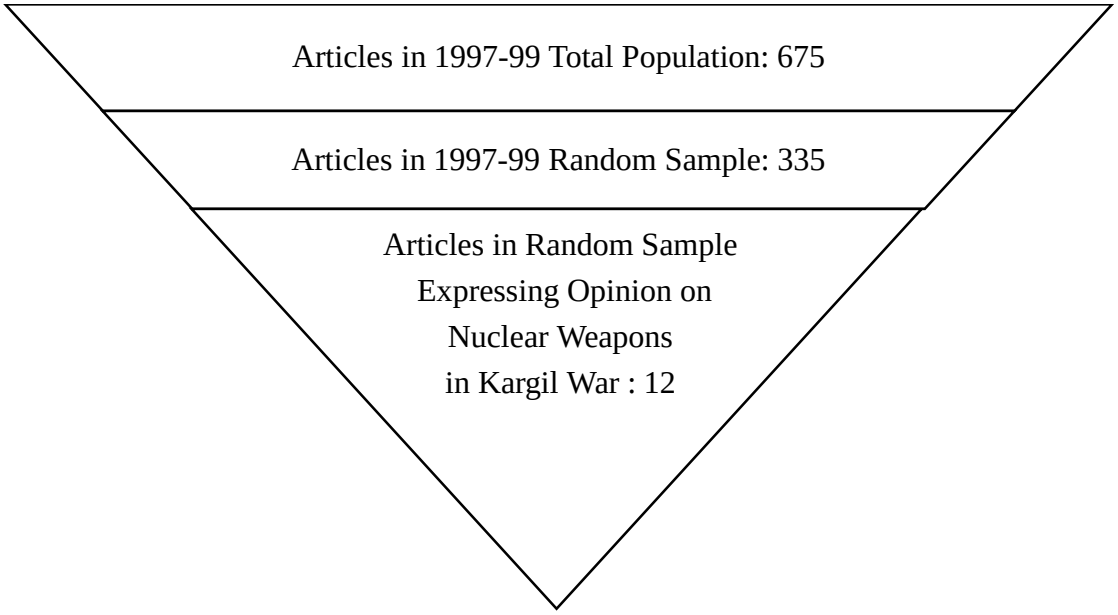
The shock of this attack so soon after the bright prospects of the Lahore summit, and the ferocity of the fighting on the ground, dismayed those analysts who had previously believed that a rational Islamabad could only agree with New Delhi that nuclear weapons made any military conflict too risky. India now found itself fighting a war with Pakistan despite this threat of nuclear escalation.

After the oceans of ink spilled since May 1998 on the expected momentous changes that the bomb would bring for Indian security, what role would it actually play in India's first war following the tests? Was there a constituency for making use of the new weapon? Would the restraint norm, previously so powerful in discussions on declaratory principles, evaporate in the face of an aggressive Pakistani military attack? The government unexpectedly found itself having to provide immediate answers for these questions.

4.2 Balance of Opinion in Strategic Discourse on Nuclear Weapons in Kargil War

Twelve articles expressed an opinion on the prospective use of nuclear weapons in the Kargil war. A graph below depicts the number of articles in the total population of articles in this 1997-99 timeframe expressing an opinion on nuclear policy; the number of the articles in the random sample derived from this total population; and, of this random sample, the number of articles expressing an opinion on this policy question.

Figure 11: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Nuclear Weapons in Kargil War



Of the twelve articles expressing an opinion on the use of nuclear weapons in the Kargil war, not one recommended it. Articles in the sample universally dismissed the idea of using nuclear weapons to end the war, and urged that the crisis be resolved solely using conventional weapons. This demonstrates that the norm of restraint did not merely operate in the discourse when discussing theoretical texts and principles concerning the nuclear force. Instead, pro-restraint arguments remained dominant in a situation of actual war, where hawkishness and jingoism might instead be expected to enjoy greater popularity.

However, it should be noted that this result somewhat exaggerates the shape of the Indian discourse, due to its extraction from a random sample of the discourse rather than a complete

bibliography of all contemporary opinion published on the Kargil war. Some sources, not captured here, did recommend use of nuclear weapons. This was most prominently expressed in a *Panchjanya* editorial. *Panchjanya* is the house newspaper of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu nationalist organisation of which the ruling BJP party was the political arm. The editorial called for the government to end the Pakistani aggression once and for all*:*

> *"Rise Atal Bihari, who knows whether you have been destined to write the last chapter of this process (of Pakistani treachery and incursions)? After all, why have we made the bomb? Only for the sake of its successful testing?"*[146]

While voices therefore did exist calling for the bomb to be used, these were still a very small minority in the discourse. Indeed, the fact that just twelve articles expressed an opinion on nuclear policy in relation to the Kargil war reflects that most general opinion articles on the war did not discuss nuclear policies at all in considering possible options. The need to demonstrate India's restraint in managing this crisis, and to settle the incursions as quickly as possible with the lowest possible level of conventional forces, was the paramount driving argument in the discourse.

4.3 Attitude Score

This concentration in the discourse was to the extent that all articles supported pro-restraint arguments, with not one making a maximal nuclear policy argument in discussing nuclear options in relation to the Kargil war. This produces an attitude score of **-1**, at the absolute pro-restraint pole of the opinion spectrum. Given that every article held a -1 score, the absence of articles coded as '0' in this episode means there will be no second calculation of attitude scores or the polarisation index for this episode. This score in comparison with those for previous policy decisions is provided in tables below.

[146] Panchjanya editorial cited in Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell", Times of India, June 23, 1999.

Table 8: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**

Table 9: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.66**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**

This signifies the most pro-restraint attitude score yet, further emphasising the universal conviction in the discourse that nuclear weapons should not be used in the Kargil crisis. It also highlights the disappearance of maximal nuclear policy arguments when the context changed from theoretical discussions of doctrine to a situation of actual war.

4.4 Polarisation of Debate

The strength of this consensus is again highlighted by the polarisation index of **0** for this discourse, representing an absolute consensus in favour of pro-restraint policies. A table summarising this index and previous indices is provided below.

Table 10: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.74**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**

Table 11: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

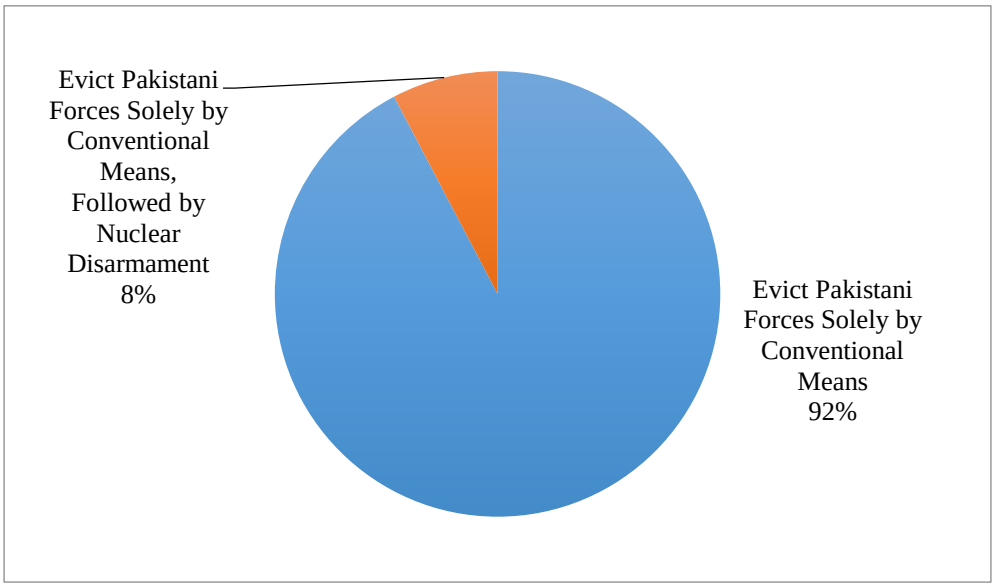
Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.76**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**

4.5 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

The consensus of opinion in favour of a pro-restraint approach, and against the use of nuclear weapons, is reflected at the level of the policy options promoted. All articles agreed that India should use solely conventional forces to end the war, with only one making a separate

recommendation that the Indian policy in Kargil also include nuclear disarmament. Compared to the cacophony of competing policy options in the previous policy question on a new nuclear doctrine, the discourse provided as unified a view as possible on the course of action for the government in this decision.

Figure 12: Policy Options Promoted in Discourse on Kargil War



The policy options agreed on an essential Indian approach of driving the Pakistani forces back across the Line of Control, the de facto international border in Kashmir, at the lowest possible level of conventional escalation. Only one article by a leftist commentator suggested a different component to this policy: for the Indian government to realise the inability of its nuclear force to prevent Pakistani aggression and to take urgent steps toward nuclear disarmament. Use of the nuclear force in any way in this crisis, then, was seen as entirely unsuitable.

Option 1: Evict Pakistani Forces Solely by Conventional Means (92%)

This policy recommendation, that the Indian government drive the Pakistani forces back across the Line of Control with the lowest possible level of conventional mobilisation, was by far the most popular option, with 92% support. Authors in this category demonstrated the

strength of the restraint norm in their candid admission of the frustrations India was facing, but still advising against any thought of using the bomb to end the war. An early realisation in the discourse was the mistaken nature of assumptions that the 1998 nuclear tests would bring an enlightened rationality to the India-Pakistan relationship, involving both sides realising that any war threatened too much destruction to be seriously considered as a policy option. Now, nuclear weapons would not prevent future wars, but instead merely added to their risks and heightened the importance of limiting their escalation, as a *Frontline* editorial argued:

> *"The Kargil crisis underlines the imperative of acquiring the political capability to manage 'war-like' crises so that they do not escalate into conventional conflicts, given the background of both India and Pakistan claiming operationalised nuclear weaponisation."*[147]

The imperative was thus for India to resolve the crisis as soon and amicably as possible, and develop the political and military tools to identify warning signs for the next crisis to prevent it escalating to the level of the Kargil conflict. This would be a far more useful endeavour than any form of use of nuclear weapons, even through ostentatious signalling to hopefully compel Pakistani moderation.

Indeed, the onus was on New Delhi to prove its previous affirmations of nuclear restraint in practice here. The potential grave consequences of this conflict escalating for Indian security and its global image made demonstrating restraint all the more crucial. A *Times of India* editorial outlined the importance of holding true to India's word:

> *"The Indian nuclear weapon is not meant to be used first, under any provocation. Its sole rationale is to deter any other nation considering the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against this country and its forces…The government has handled the intrusion with restraint and our armed forces have been carrying out their task with admirable skill and in line with the political direction…At this stage, there is no justification to give a handle to our enemies and provide them with ammunition to be used effectively against this country in world forums."*[148]

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[147] Editorial, "The Pokhran-Kargil Connection", Frontline, July 2, 1999.

[148] Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell".

Some articles departed from urging quick conventional settlement of the war to also reflect upon the impact of nuclear weapons on the conflict. The situation India now found itself in was shaped by the existence of mutual nuclear deterrence in the India-Pakistan relationship. However, the effect of this deterrence was not to provide the anticipated positive context of mutually assured destruction conducive to serious peace talks. Instead, Pakistan now demonstrated greater conventional military confidence, in the belief that India would be self-deterred and capitulate rather than win the war at all costs. A *Hindustan Times* editorial bitterly acknowledged this point:

> *"Pakistan knew fully well that it could now afford to indulge in brinkmanship even more recklessly than before because India could no longer afford to retaliate as effectively as it could before becoming a nuclear power."*[149]

Despite this weary recognition that Pakistan was not the responsible nuclear state India had wished it might evolve into, there was no strategy for India in the war but to evict the intruders as soon and as with little conventional forces as possible. Thoughts of teaching Pakistan a broader lesson would not aid Indian security in this nuclear context. The Lahore summit approach still signified the only way India and Pakistan would secure peace, no matter how distant that option appeared in this present situation:

> *"What Islamabad has not realised even after three wars is that it cannot take away Kashmir from India by force. It is a political problem. It cannot be sorted out in a battlefield. Were Pakistan to adopt a course of confrontation, it would destroy the subcontinent because both sides have now acquired nuclear capability. In fact, this is the time when people on both sides must raise their voice against escalation…The bus diplomacy should be given more content, not abandoned."*[150]

The articles recommending this policy option therefore strongly rejected the notion of the nuclear force having any role in settling the conflict, and urged that it be resolved through use of conventional forces. There was a broad recognition, as illuminated in the *Hindustan Times* editorial, that mutual nuclear deterrence had indeed limited India's flexibility to escalate,

[149] Editorial, "India's Nuclear Insecurity", Hindustan Times, June 7, 1999.

[150] Kuldip Nayar, "Jaw-Jaw, Not War-War", Indian Express, June 8, 1999.

further supporting the advice to terminate the war with as little conventional escalation as possible. Although it seemed impossible in this context, a return to the Lahore process was the only ultimate way toward a final peace with Pakistan, and this goal should be continued when the time was right. This war formed the first major test of Indian affirmations of nuclear restraint, and with the world watching, India could not afford to fail.

Articles in this category mainly consisted of centrist broadsheet editorials, with a lesser constituency of pro-Congress and leftist former ambassadors and commentators. With 92% of the discourse aligning with this policy option, this formed an overwhelming concentration of opinion.

The relative absence of pro-BJP and military sources from this policy option has two causes. The random sample simply did not include these in its random selection of articles here; and where these authors contributed to the Kargil debate, they omitted the thought of nuclear weapons entirely and also focused on conventional means. Indeed, the aforementioned *Panchjanya* editorial, which was widely condemned across the discourse, was one of the very few voices in Indian society recommending that nuclear weapons be used in Kargil.

Option 2: Evict Pakistani Forces Solely by Conventional Means, Followed by Nuclear Disarmament (8%)

The one article recommending this slightly different policy option was written by a leftist columnist and dedicated campaigner for nuclear disarmament. This article shared the same recognition as the majority option that the Indian nuclear force had not deterred future wars and created a new context conducive to peace. However, it further continued the argument, advising that having thus been proven operationally useless, the weapons should be dismantled. The author identified nuclear weapons as a new central problem in the bilateral relationship.

> *"…despite Kargil's setback to the Lahore process, India and Pakistan can achieve peace and conciliation. Such things do happen in the real world among bitter rivals once they begin addressing the root causes of tension and insecurity and realise cooperation's merits. In our case, there are three main sources of insecurity:*

Kashmir, nuclear weapons and unresolved boundary and resource-sharing disputes."[151]

Framing nuclear weapons as a core driver of future conflicts between India and Pakistan – a point not shared by the majority policy option, which presented them rather as a complicating factor – led Bidwai to again press for their abolition:

"This means we have to begin negotiating nuclear danger-reduction, restraint and disarmament, and discuss Kashmir. The first must include a verifiable freeze on nuclear and missile development and a return to the regional and global disarmament agenda, which alone can ensure our long-term security."[152]

However, the stance of this author as a fierce leftist critic of most aspects of government policy, and all aspects of its nuclear policy to develop overt weaponised deterrence, limited its potential impact in shaping government policy. This policy option was also represented by only one article in the discourse, further limiting the potential likelihood of it being adopted as policy.

4.6 Summary

The discourse on the Kargil war again demonstrates the significance of the pro-restraint norm as a dominant organising value in Indian nuclear thought. The Kargil discourse occupied the most pro-restraint stance on the opinion spectrum yet, at the extreme pole. Given that this was the first policy decision related to a situation of wartime, with its related aspects of emotions running high and increased perceptions of national danger, it is therefore all the more remarkable that pro-restraint opinions did not decrease but instead even gained support, to the extent that they universally characterised the wartime discourse.

Indeed, the two policy options presented were visibly pro-restraint arguments, divided only by the consideration of whether the failure of nuclear weapons to secure India in this context

[151] Praful Bidwai, "Can There Ever Be Peace Between India and Pakistan?" Times of India, June 6, 1999.

[152] Ibid.

should lead to Indian disarmament. The arguments agreed that India should remove Pakistani intruders using the lowest possible level of conventional forces; that they should not cross the Line of Control; and that nuclear weapons should remain firmly in storage, with even ostentatious signalling of missile movements or verbal nuclear threats firmly ruled out. There was simply zero support for using or hinting about using the bomb, in any way. While right-of-centre and hawkish arguments did not materialise in this particular element of the random sample, this is due to their complete omission of any mention of the bomb at all – they shared this voice for ending the war through conventional means.

There was notable recognition that developing the bomb had limited India's ability to win the war through conventional escalation. By thus hindering India's traditional conventional superiority over Pakistan, the Indian bomb had paradoxically aided Pakistan's conventional posture. Despite the realisation of these frustrating conditions, authors nevertheless promoted conventional settlement of the war as the only possible policy route. The overall momentous frustrations that India faced in contemplating and conducting a new war with Pakistan, so soon after the promise of Lahore and despite the mutual nuclear deterrence that was supposed to bring greater regional stability, did not generate any maximalist arguments for India to use or emphasise the bomb in any way. Conventional restraint was the only way forward, as universally recommended by the discourse.

4.7 Selecting an Option

With just two policy options being recommended, and the most popular option commanding a dominant 92% of support of the discourse, it was highly likely based upon the previous patter of correlation that the government policy would resemble this option: to evict Pakistani forces solely by conventional means. This option was broad enough to admit authors from several different political constituencies; its main supporters were centrist broadsheet editorials, followed by a lesser concentration of pro-Congress former ambassadors and commentators and leftist voices. This represented the centrist political base, plus one of sheer overall numerical dominance in the discourse, that had characterised successful policy options in the past.

The second option, for India to evict Pakistan forces by conventional means but also, in the recognition that the bomb had failed to secure India, taking steps toward disarmament, was advanced by just one article, written by a prominent opponent of most of the governing philosophy of the ruling BJP party. This low visibility, combined with the political differences between the author and government, made it highly unlikely his recommendation would correlate with government policy.

Government policies in the Kargil war indeed resembled the first policy option. Any use of nuclear weapons was firmly ruled out. New Delhi continually attempted to resolve the conflict with the lowest possible level of forces and avoid moving up the escalation ladder. Indeed, this policy prolonged the course of the war. Pakistani intruders were first met by limited Indian army patrols. When that had failed to compel them back across the border, larger-scale Indian army deployments were authorised. Only when that that posture too had become demonstrably insufficient was a further conventional escalation authorised, bringing in the air force for the first time to bombard Pakistani ground positions. The determination of the government to maintain control of the escalation ladder was also highlighted by the air force having little knowledge of the situation on the ground until the point it was ordered to assist the army, reflecting the extent to which the war had hitherto been handled as only an army operation.

The air strikes, plus greater army deployments, eventually succeeded in driving the Pakistani forces across the Line of Control.[153] Indian forces were explicitly directed not to cross the Line of Control at any point in the war, another element of restraint recommended in the discourse, and one that differentiated the Kargil conflict from previous India-Pakistan wars. The visible conventional restraint of the Indian government, and preference for limiting movements up the escalation ladder where a more overwhelming conventional force array might have ended the war earlier, aligns with the majority policy option recommended in the discourse. The organising value of nuclear restraint, now gaining universal support in the discourse, was also the clear approach of the government in prosecuting the war.

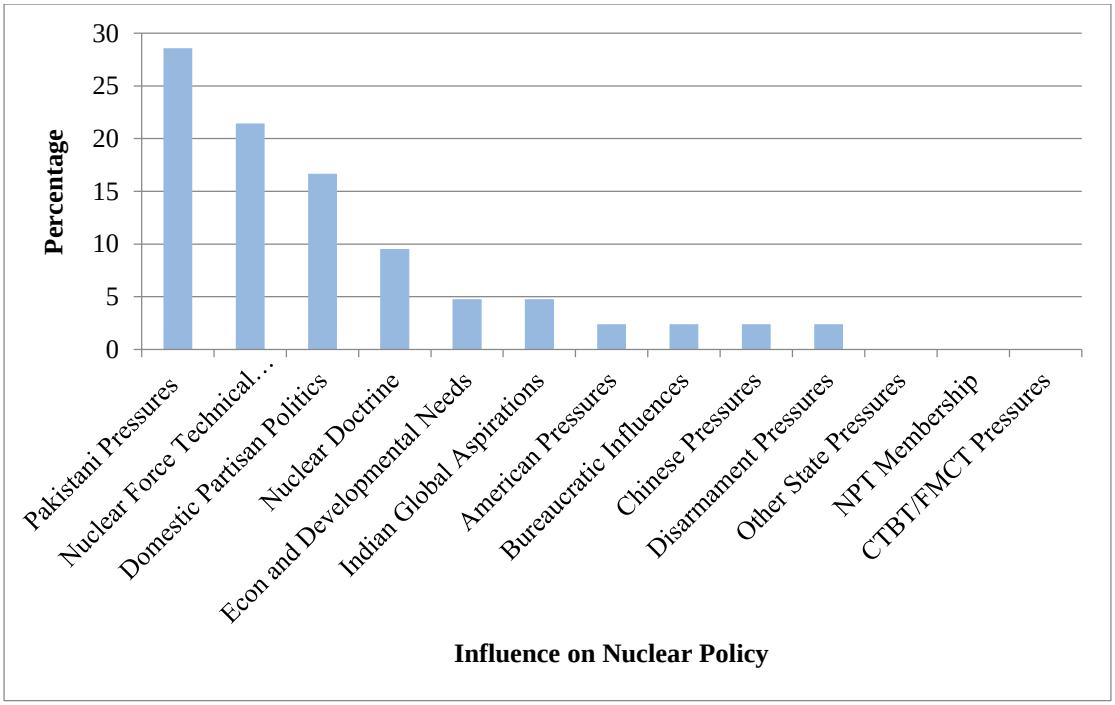
[153] Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Airpower at 18,000': The Indian Air Force in the Kargil War* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012) pp. 5-34.

While maximal nuclear policy arguments had enjoyed a certain degree of support in previous policy decisions to settle aspects of India's public declaratory nuclear policy – on the questions of new nuclear tests, and a public nuclear doctrine – they entirely vanished when the discourse turned to considering nuclear policy in a situation of actual war. This offers further granularity to our understanding of the influence of restraint as an organising value in the discourse. Its significance was such that it was strengthened in wartime, and enjoyed less support only in the more abstract conversations available to strategic analysts in the theoretical conversations over phrasings of nuclear doctrine.

With the Kargil war marking the first practical test of the attestations of responsible nuclear stewardship and nuclear restraint made by the Indian government since the 1998 tests, India held true to its word.

4.8 Issues Cited in Discourse on Kargil War

Figure 13: Issues Cited in Discourse on Kargil War



The situation of actual war, as a dramatically different context to the previous peacetime theoretical discussions on aspects of nuclear doctrine and declaratory policy, produced a hierarchy of salient issues at variance with the policy questions considered before. The top four influences (Pakistani Pressures, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, Domestic Partisan Politics and Nuclear Doctrine) reflected an increased weighting of domestic over external influences.

This characteristic partly reflects a wartime framing of a purely India-Pakistan bilateral policy focus, which notably downgraded the importance of pressures emanating from America, China and other states, along with external elements of the nonproliferation regime such as the NPT and CTBT. This corresponded with an increased introversion in the discourse, as it primarily turned to considering different strategies, force concentrations, and domestic political arguments concerning the conduct of the war. While Pakistan was predictably the most cited influence, the hierarchy of issues thus signified this principally domestic focus.

Table 12: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Kargil War

The universal attitude score of -1 for all articles discussing the Kargil war, representing an absolute pro-restraint consensus in the discourse, meant that there would also be little variation in positioning on the restraint/maximal policy spectrum depending upon the type of influence cited by each article. The table below underlines the extent to which the restraint norm dominated the discourse, with no variation through any of the thirteen possible filters of salient issues on nuclear policy.

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
American Pressures	-1
Bureaucratic Influences	-1
Chinese Pressures	-1
Disarmament Pressures	-1
Domestic Partisan Politics	-1
Economic and Developmental Needs	-1
Indian Global Aspirations	-1
Nuclear Doctrine	-1
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-1
Pakistani Pressures	-1
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*
NPT Membership	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*
Other State Pressures	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Use of Nuclear Weapons in Kargil War	*-1*

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Articles citing Pakistan evinced a weary recognition of its behaviour as a return to form after the promise of the Lahore summit. As details of the Kargil intrusion became clear, the likely motives and outlook of its organisers were posited and dissected in the strategic discourse. The hopes of the nascent Lahore process, underpinned by an Indian assumption that mutual nuclear deterrence would render war too dangerous an option to be contemplated, should not have obscured Pakistan's actual military activities, as commentators now recognised.[154]

[154] A.G. Noorani, "Questions of Accountability", Frontline, July 2, 1999.

However, the fact that Pakistan was returning to its old habits, despite the context of continuing global concern regarding Indo-Pakistani tensions in a newly nuclear environment, created new opportunities for New Delhi in the midst of the crisis. India could now change international perceptions of the relationship; continuing a strategy of defensive conventional restraint would create a contrast with an emerging global image of Pakistan as reckless aggressor. Creating this new international image could weaken Pakistan to the extent that future Kargils would be judged too costly by Islamabad. Therefore, continuing this restraint was the best way for Pakistan to stumble further into this trap it had set for itself.[155]

While the Kargil war was thus immensely frustrating, and appeared to involve pointless costs of human life, energy and resources, there was no alternative route to this steady, restrained, conventional repudiation of the intruders. This could eventuate in shifting the perceptions of India and Pakistan in global diplomacy, with India emerging as a responsible aspirant superpower and Pakistan as a deteriorating regional provocateur. The temptation, as expressed in the *Panchjanya* editorial, to make use of India's new bomb to end the conflict immediately should not be entertained, as even allowing this idea to circulate in public discussion threatened to undermine India's prospects of developing this image as a responsible nuclear power.[156]

This framing of Pakistan in the discourse highlighted the degree of consensus behind a pro-restraint approach, featuring conventional repudiation of the intruders and not even discussing the option of using the bomb. All articles expressing an opinion on nuclear policy in relation to the Kargil predictably cited Pakistan as an influence. Therefore, the political constituency behind both sets was the same: principally centrist broadsheet editorials, with a smaller concentration of former Congress and leftist ambassadors and commentators.

[155] Editorial, "United We Stand", Indian Express, June 12, 1999.

[156] Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell".

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

Nuclear Force Technical Advancements served as the second most cited influence in the discourse. This highlights the extent to which this issue was becoming one of the central influences on nuclear discourse.

However, the tendency in previous discussions of articles citing this issue to bear a slightly more pro-maximal policy slant – based upon an interest in developing and protecting India's new nuclear capabilities in nuclear policy discussions – was not replicated here. This reflects the change of context from the theoretical declaratory and political nuclear declarations in a situation of peacetime as in the previous debates, to a new situation of actual war between nuclear-armed states. The resultant attitude score of -1 for articles citing Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, the same as for all other influences, reflects that a rethinking of nuclear policy that new nuclear capabilities might encourage did not carry into policy considerations during war. Indeed, the framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in this discourse was in the form of emphasising the changed strategic environment following the Pokhran and Chagai tests, and the real risks of any escalation in this newly nuclear region.[157]

Indeed, as some articles recognised, nuclear weapons possession had hamstrung rather than helped Indian defence in this situation. Their military unsuitability became clear to the commentators here. The policy options recommended by the discourse flowed from this universal acceptance that India's nuclear force had evidently not deterred the Kargil aggression, but equally were unsuitable as compared to conventional forces for re-establishing deterrence. Kargil had impressed upon India this nuclear lesson, and there was a hope that Pakistan in time would appreciate this new reality too.[158]

Nuclear Force Technical Advancements therefore retained its position as one of the prime influences on nuclear policy in the discourse, but its impact on India's nuclear policy options notably changed. Where before considering Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as an issue had led to imaginative analyses of new nuclear options for India and the need to protect

[157] Aroon Purie, "From the Editor", India Today, June 7, 1999.

[158] Nayar, "Jaw-Jaw, Not War-War".

these emerging technological assets from political limitations, the experience of war between nuclear-armed states swept away these technological projections.

Instead, a grim realisation took hold that nuclear weapons, through fear of escalation, had limited India's ability to respond to Pakistani conventional aggression. Where before there had been hopes that mutual nuclear deterrence would create a new bilateral context conducive to peace, there was now a recognition that nuclear weapons merely complicated the old unstable relationship. Strong conventional defences were the only way to block Pakistani military adventurism, just as the way they had been before the Pokhran tests. The costs of employing India's nuclear force in any way, even through calculated methods of signalling or brinkmanship, were too high. India's nuclear force was therefore for the first time perceived as another danger rather than a useful tool for the security challenges India faced.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

Domestic Partisan Politics as an influence on nuclear policy rose to one of the top four most important issues, signifying the importance of domestic resolve and finding appropriate domestic responses to the Kargil shock within the nuclear discourse. The manifestations of this issue within the Kargil discourse were principally calls for domestic unity, and specifically unity behind the principle that even considering using the bomb would hurt India's image in this conflict. A lesser second focus was to highlight the parliamentary and political performance of India's defence minister, and call for a defence inquiry into how the Pakistani strike had been allowed to materialise seemingly unnoticed once the war had concluded.

The now-infamous *Panchjanya* editorial came in for barracking in the discourse, and was used as a foil for how Indians should not respond if they wished to emerge the unambiguous moral and military victor of the war. The recognition that the world was nervously watching the conduct of this war, and that the behaviour of both states would thus greatly shape future global perceptions of their attitudes to regional security and international order, also influenced authors who cited domestic partisan politics. A mature, restrained and unified Indian response to the Kargil aggression would establish clear differences with the emerging

aggressive, risk-taking attitude of Pakistan in newly nuclear South Asia, and win New Delhi international plaudits and increased leverage as the responsible actor in the crisis.[159]

This goal was why it was imperative for any talk of using the bomb to be avoided in India – doing so would encourage a false equivalence to again be drawn of India and Pakistan as two irreconcilable warmongers. The *Panchjanya* editorial represented the main domestic risk to this desired responsible image for India as the most prominent voice calling for use of nuclear weapons, which is why it drew particular ire from several authors in the discourse.[160]

The importance of demonstrating that the norm of nuclear restraint universally applied throughout the Indian political spectrum was therefore the prime concern of articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics as an issue. Surveying the domestic political landscape, these commentators recommended that India demonstrate its superior moral status to the aggressors in Pakistan by refraining from any talk of nuclear final solutions but instead transferring their frustrations and anger into quiet resolve to restore the status quo along the border. A unified domestic polity that held to this position would reap the maximum strategic benefits from the war.

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

Reflecting the overall view of nuclear weapons as unusable in this crisis, the citation of Nuclear Doctrine as an influence on nuclear policy emphasised the no-first-use policy and other previously announced measures of restraint to ensure the nuclear force was kept firmly out of the conversation regarding Pakistan. Given that so much energy had been devoted by India's strategic thinkers and the government to developing a nuclear doctrine of minimalist, responsible stewardship of the bomb underlined by the no-first-use policy, commentators felt that the Kargil war proved the perfect opportunity to demonstrate that India's word was its bond.[161]

[159] Editorial, "United We Stand".

[160] Tavleen Singh, "Nuke Nuts in the RSS", India Today, July 12, 1999.

[161] Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell".

Among the left, however, the existence of the Kargil conflict demonstrated the worthlessness of the nuclear force and supported their previous arguments for disarmament. In its reading, the hopes of the government that mutual nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan would generate a new peace drive had obscured Pakistan's military preparations for Kargil. The only route to peace led through nuclear disarmament, they held.[162]

These perspectives demonstrated that the norms of restraint and no-first-use embodied in the nuclear doctrine held deep roots within the Indian discourse. Indeed, they enjoyed full-throated support in the midst of a war, when wishes for punishing Pakistan and teaching unforgettable lessons might increase and place greater pressure on these principles.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

Economic and Developmental Needs, as the joint fifth most cited influence, were deployed by two articles to emphasise what was at stake for India should it succumb to temptations to escalate the war in a nuclear South Asia. Lifting millions out of poverty and economic growth remained as crucial a task as ever, and escalation would drive India in the opposite direction from this goal. The prospect of nuclear war was indeed farcical from this angle.[163]

The deployment of this issue introduced another plank to the pro-restraint arguments that universally characterised the discourse on the Kargil war. Bringing the wider human and economic costs of escalation into the conversation regarding how best to prosecute the Kargil war, and thus preventing the debate being solely of military efficiencies and different options for restoring deterrence along the border, therefore became a means of further entrenching the restraint norm and general support for policies of ending the war with the lowest possible level of conventional mobilisation.[164]

[162] Editorial, "The Pokhran-Kargil Connection".

[163] Pamela Philipose, "Loose Nukes", Indian Express, June 27, 1999.

[164] Bidwai, "Can There Ever Be Peace Between India and Pakistan?".

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

The deployment of this issue as joint fifth-most cited influence demonstrated another broadening of the perspective beyond the military balance in the discourse on how to end Pakistani aggression. The importance of different policy options in affecting India's global image mattered greatly to commentators in the discourse. An image of Pakistan as the aggressor in this war would take root if India maintained a defensive repulsion of the intruders and did not seek broader retaliation. In this way, the war represented an opportunity for India to put clear blue water between it and Pakistan in terms of their reputations in global politics. A limited conventional eviction of the intruders, therefore, would also suit India's global image goals.[165]

Domestic political unity behind this restrained strategy would make this new Indian image more convincing to external audiences, and prevent other states drawing equivalences based upon a view that both sides were equally extreme. This desired image helped stimulate such approbation in response to the *Panchjanya* editorial, which threatened to support a contrasting global image of India as no less extremist than Pakistan.[166]

As with the previous issue of economic and developmental needs, citing Indian global aspirations served to introduce other reasons for Indian restraint beyond its military suitability. How India behaved in this crisis was immensely important for validating and promoting its desired image as a responsible rising power, a point that should not be missed in Indian policymaking toward the war.

Issue: American Pressures

American Pressures were only cited by one article as an influence on Indian nuclear policy. This reflects the primarily Pakistan-centric and domestic focuses of the Indian discourse, compelled by the wartime context. The reference to American Pressures was in the same frame as that for Indian global aspirations: to underline that the world was watching the

[165] Singh, "Nuke Nuts in the RSS".

[166] Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell".

comparative actions of India and Pakistan, and the war presented for India a rare opportunity to improve its relationship with the United States at the cost of Washington's relationship with Islamabad.

This opportunity, the article held, should be fully grasped by India by intensive diplomacy with the United States combined with conventional restraint toward Pakistan. The *Panchjanya* line of thinking threatened to upset this rare preferment by Washington of the Indian position over that of Pakistan.[167]

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

Bureaucratic Influences was only cited by one article, an extensive diagnosis by a leftist radical commentator of the missed signals of Pakistani movements leading up to the war. The enthusiasm of the defence bureaucratic enclave and pro-nuclear politicians for nuclear force development as a panacea for India's security problems had blinded their eyes to the ground realities along the Line of Control, the author held.[168]

The ability of India's defence agencies to develop nuclear weapons contrasted with the obvious shortcomings in its intelligence and conventional mobilisation capabilities vis-à-vis Pakistan. The article argued that an official inquiry was urgently needed to learn from the Indian mistakes made leading up to the war, and prevent such misplaced nuclear optimism placing India at risk through failure to prepare strong conventional defences again. A robust conventional posture against Pakistan, combined with regular peace initiatives, presented the only realistic prospects for peace.

The placing of Bureaucratic Influences as the joint sixth most cited influence appeared at first sight to be its highest ranking yet. However, given that it was only cited by one article, and that joint sixth in reality served as joint last, the position of Bureaucratic Influences here conformed to its previous pattern of forming the least most cited influence on nuclear policy.

[167] Singh, "Nuke Nuts in the RSS".

[168] Noorani, "Questions of Accountability".

While the influence of the bureaucratic agencies has been amply documented in the academic literature as an important aspect of understanding Indian nuclear policymaking, there were particular headwinds against its popularity as an issue in the discourse here.[169] The previous problem of the quiet, secretive nature of bureaucratic interactions being less visible in the public eye than military movements by Pakistan or public statements by superpowers continued, as the agencies did not enter the public sphere of debate on nuclear policy. This combined with the particular headwind in the discourse against any notion of developing new technical options for the nuclear force – the raison d'être of the agencies – as caused by the overwhelming popular conviction in favour of conventional restraint as the only way forward for the Indian government.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

The one article citing Chinese Pressures did so to highlight the opportunity for India to use the war to build bridges with China as well as the United States. Pakistan's increasingly desperate efforts to win Chinese support for its position in the war were visibly failing, creating room for India to include China along with the United States in a supportive international coalition to force an end to the war on Indian terms. With China evidently closing its door to Pakistan's envoys, alongside a similar coldness from Washington, Islamabad had nowhere left to turn but to sue for peace with New Delhi. India should thus not worry about the frequent overtures by Pakistan to China, as an *Indian Express* editorial argued.

However, the article still advised Indian moderation in how it responded to this China-Pakistan split. Expecting a fully-fledged Sino-Indian strategic partnership to follow was unrealistic; instead, India would obtain the greatest respect, and potential gains, from its

[169] For background on this topic, see Frank O'Donnell and Harsh V. Pant, "Evolution of India's Agni-V Missile: Bureaucratic Politics and Nuclear Ambiguity", Asian Survey Vol. 54 No. 3 (May/June 2014); Vipin Narang, "Five Myths about India's Nuclear Posture", Washington Quarterly Vol. 36 Issue 3 (2013) pp. 143-157; and Koithara, *Managing India's Nuclear Forces*.

relationship with China by treating Beijing with the same realist calculation with which the latter viewed the world.[170]

Issue: Disarmament Pressures

Disarmament Pressures was cited by a leftist anti-nuclear commentator, in an article recommending the separate policy option that India evict the Pakistani intruders at the lowest possible level of conventional mobilisation, combined with immediate Indian movements toward nuclear disarmament. As the author argued, nuclear deterrence was now a central problem in the India-Pakistan relationship and had demonstrably not secured either of their populations.[171] However, the articulation of this policy option by just one article demonstrated that the majority of commentators felt that India should retain the bomb; it was just perceived to be entirely inappropriate for use in this particular conventional conflict.

Issues Not Cited: Other State Pressures, NPT Membership, CTBT/FMCT Pressures

Three of the thirteen influences – Other State Pressures, NPT Membership, and CTBT/FMCT Pressures – were not cited at all in the discourse. This reflects again the unique context of the Kargil war and the narrowing of perspectives to concentrate on issues directly relevant to ending the war. The absence of other state pressures from the discourse is not surprising given that American and Chinese Pressures both suffered a dramatic decline in the hierarchy of relevant issues, due to the primarily bilateral focus by commentators on India-Pakistan movements. NPT Membership and CTBT/FMCT Pressures, for their own part, were questions for nuclear declaratory policy in peacetime, and judged irrelevant to how India should prosecute the Kargil war.

[170] Editorial, "Changed China", Indian Express, July 1, 1999.

[171] Bidwai, "Can There Ever Be Peace Between India and Pakistan?"

4.9 Conclusions

The Kargil war, the first military conflict just months after the 1998 nuclear tests, was a pivotal episode in India's nuclear journey. Previous policy questions had all involved aspects of nuclear declaratory policy in a peaceable regional context. This environment gave commentators political space to think outside the box, unlike the sense of pressure, narrowing of options, and immediacy that permeates strategic discourse during a war.

The Kargil war thus represented a high-wire test of Indian nuclear restraint. However, the response from the discourse, and the official responses selected by the government, demonstrated to the strongest possible degree the influence of nuclear restraint in shaping Indian perceptions of the role of its nuclear force. Every article held a -1 attitude score, producing an overall attitude score at the absolute pro-restraint pole. The polarisation index, for its own part, showed absolute consensus in the discourse on these attitudes.

Of the articles in the sample, not one recommended that the nuclear force be used in any way, even along the lines of signalling, to advance the Indian cause in the war. The commentators universally preferred that the conflict be settled by conventional means.

Indeed, the policy options developed by the discourse demonstrated an overriding concern with the prospect of escalation of the war to the nuclear level. The majority policy option, with 92% support from the discourse, was indeed for India to evict the intruders with the lowest possible level of conventional forces. The only difference between this and the second policy option, with 8% support, was that the second advocated for simultaneous Indian movement toward nuclear disarmament. The government response correlated with this majority policy option in prosecuting the war.

The articles captured by the random sample for this particular policy question did not include pro-BJP and military sources, instead principally featuring centrist broadsheet editorials and a lesser concentration of pro-Congress and leftist former commentators and ambassadors. However, where these pro-BJP and military authors contributed to the debate, they omitted any mention of nuclear policy in relation to Kargil – with expression of an opinion on nuclear policy the key criterion for inclusion in the dataset – and also focused on settling the war at the lowest possible level of conventional mobilisation.

The level of consensus across the political spectrum in favour of this strategy was also witnessed by the degree of approbation in the discourse visited upon one of the very few voices advocating Indian use of nuclear weapons, the *Panchjanya* editorial. Indeed, the normally moderate *Times of India* editorial board went so far as to damn the *Panchjanya* article as "*a stab in the back far worse than what the Pakistanis have done in Kargil"*.[172] For the commentators in the discourse, demonstrating that Indian nuclear restraint characterised its wartime conduct extended to ensuring it obtained universal support across the political spectrum.

Pakistan was creating an image for itself as irresponsible aggressor, and by holding to a strategy of limited conventional eviction of intruders India was creating a contrasting image of a responsible, restrained rising power, with important emerging consequences for their international reputations and comparative ability to marshal other states to support their positions. These opportunities could not be lost for India by allowing the *Panchjanya* thinking to gain popularity.

The hierarchy of influences on nuclear policy reflected different aspects of the overwhelming concern of the discourse that India adhere to a policy of removing the intruders by limited conventional means, and that this nuclear restraint obtain universal support throughout the political spectrum to present a unified responsible image to the world. This was particularly evident in the presentation of the top four most cited influences. Pakistan, as the predictable most cited influence, was presented in language of palpable frustration as returning to its old irresponsible behaviour. However, the authors concluded with a weary recognition that the only realistic means for long-term peace was to repudiate the intruders then restart the Lahore process.

Nuclear Force Technical Advancements rose to the second most cited influence here, but the previous tendency for articles citing this issue to hold slightly more pro-maximal policy leanings did not continue here. The main presentation of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was now as a complicating additional danger in the war, in introducing the risk of nuclear escalation. India's nuclear force capabilities had been seen in the two previous

[172] Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell".

discourses as an overall benefit to Indian security, although one that must be closely guided by the organising value of restraint. However, the dominance of the restraint norm gained such overwhelming strength in this discourse that even discussing the bomb in the context of this security crisis, as the *Panchjanya* editorial dared to, was universally viewed as endangering India. There was a new consensus in this discourse that the bomb was unuseable in this security crisis, representing a distillation of minimalist thought.

Domestic Partisan Politics, as the third most cited issue, reflected the bilateral and domestic focus of the wartime discourse, with three of the top four influences being domestic. This issue was cited to emphasise the importance of domestic political actors showing the right kind of support for the nation during the war; matching restraint with resolve. In this way, India would emerge from the war as the unquestioned moral as well as military victor, boosting its aspirant image as a responsible rising power.

As the fourth most cited influence, Nuclear Doctrine was portrayed in terms of the imperative that India make good on its no-first-use doctrinal pledge, and only consider using the bomb in any way if India suffered a nuclear first strike. Commentators realised that the war signified a test for India's previous statements of nuclear restraint, and emphasised that India could not afford to fail.

The Kargil experience therefore demonstrated an Indian view, shared across the political spectrum, that nuclear weapons were militarily unuseable to resolve this conventional conflict. Expectations that sentiments of increased nuclear hawkishness might increase given the pressures and high emotions of the wartime context did not materialise; instead, the discourse registered its most pro-restraint attitude score yet. Nuclear restraint was thus demonstrably a real organising value for Indian policy in times of war as well as peace.

Chapter 5: Decision: 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis

5.1 Introduction

The pressure that the 1999 Kargil war had placed upon the Indian polity and society, in forcing it to confront a Pakistan seemingly undeterred by the Indian nuclear force while doing so in a way that preserved India's image as a restrained, responsible nuclear power, left a sense of suppressed frustration within India. While the government won international accolades for its restraint in limiting its military response to evicting Pakistani intruders across the Line of Control, the outcome did not appear to bring other tangible advantages for India in its strategic position against Pakistan.

As shown in this next discourse, there was a sense within the Indian polity that Islamabad had not any learned a lesson in the dangers of such adventurism, and that there was little to prevent future Kargils despite the mutual nuclear risks these scenarios held. The domestic political cachet that Pakistani army chief Pervez Musharraf obtained as architect of the Kargil operation, which propelled him to unseat elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a military coup, offered grounds for further pessimism regarding a final peace based upon the reality of mutually assured destruction.

The incoming US Bush administration, taking office in January 2001, created both opportunity and threat for the Indian government in this context. While foreign policy officials of the new administration had outlined their hopes for a closer strategic relationship with India in their contributions to the 2000 US presidential campaign, the reality of these aspirations remained to be seen.[173] Every presidential administration requires time at the outset of its first term to decide its priorities and policies, creating uncertainty over what form of Indian relationship with the new administration would emerge. Finally, the Bush administration before the September 11 attacks was particularly focused on domestic issues, and the incoming president did not appear to have much personal interest in foreign affairs.

[173] See, for example, contributions of prominent officials Condoleeza Rice, Robert Zoellick, and Ashley Tellis. Condoleeza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest", Foreign Affairs Vol. 79 No. 1 (January/February 2000) pp. 45-62; Robert B. Zoellick, "A Republican Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs Vol. 79 No. 1 (January/February 2000) pp. 63-78; and Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*.

If the Bush administration until September 11 was therefore already something of an unknown quantity for New Delhi, the attacks greatly magnified this problem. The Indian government still had little idea of how this Washington would balance its relationships with New Delhi and Islamabad, but the Bush administration foreign policy agenda now underwent a volte-face toward aggressive interventionism in South Asia. American forces began operations in Afghanistan to root out both al-Qaeda and the Taliban government in October 2001, and the Pentagon dramatically stepped up its liaison with the Pakistani military to assist in stabilising the region. How all this would affect the US-India bilateral relationship, in a context where good American relations with Pakistan appeared more geopolitically valuable to it than with India, remained to be seen. Another question mark hung over the attitude of Washington to nuclear proliferation – would India face further fights with the United States over its right to develop a nuclear force?

In the midst of this regional and international upheaval, with the world still reeling from the shock of the World Trade Center attacks and emerging global implications of a post-September 11 world, came the December 2001 Indian Parliament attacks. On the morning of December 13, 2001, a car containing five militants entered the Indian Parliament complex while Parliament was in session. Having passed the first gate due to their use of a fake Home Ministry badge and a car model used by government officials, the militants spotted the Vice President's vehicle and rammed it. This collision alerted the Indian security forces.[174]

Indian Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh was working in his office just twenty-five yards away from the militants, while other senior officials and opposition leaders were in the building. The resulting shootout just outside the Parliament building, which lasted about half an hour, led to the deaths of all five militants and eight policemen. The faked Home Ministry badge, it was later discovered, had been defaced to now pledge to destroy India.[175]

India's Cabinet Committee on Security convened that afternoon, shocked that militants had been able to strike so close to the centre of government, and had only narrowly avoided a massacre of parliamentarians. Investigators quickly determined that the Pakistan-sponsored

[174] Praveen Swami, "A War to End a War", in Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur (eds.) *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: Crisis Behavior and the Bomb* (New York: Routledge, 2008) pp. 144-146.

[175] Steve Coll, "The Stand-off", The New Yorker, February 13, 2008.

militant groups Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba were responsible.[176] Prime Minister Vajpayee, vocalising the public shock and anger immediately after the attacks, intoned:

> *"This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation...We accept the challenge."*[177]

With these militant groups sponsored by Pakistan, who were already killing Indian soldiers in Kashmir and along the Line of Control, now striking at the heart of the Indian government at their leisure, how would India respond? What policies would give the Indian public a sense of justice and raise costs on Pakistan enough for it to cease such provocations – with this attack far more audacious than the Kargil episode – while limiting possible escalation in such moves to below the nuclear threshold? How could the Indian government punish Pakistan without sacrificing its image, so assiduously sought in its actions in Kargil, as the restrained and responsible regional leader? These dilemmas now confronted the government. Recognising the difficulty of this situation, which demanded some form of response from the government, Prime Minister Vajpayee informed Parliament on December 19, 2001 that:

> *"We'll think through everything before making any decision. . . Decisions on war or peace are not taken in haste."*[178]

5.2 Balance of Opinion in Strategic Discourse on Nuclear Weapons in 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis

Fifty-two articles in the 2001-5 random sample expressed an opinion on the use of nuclear weapons in the 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis.

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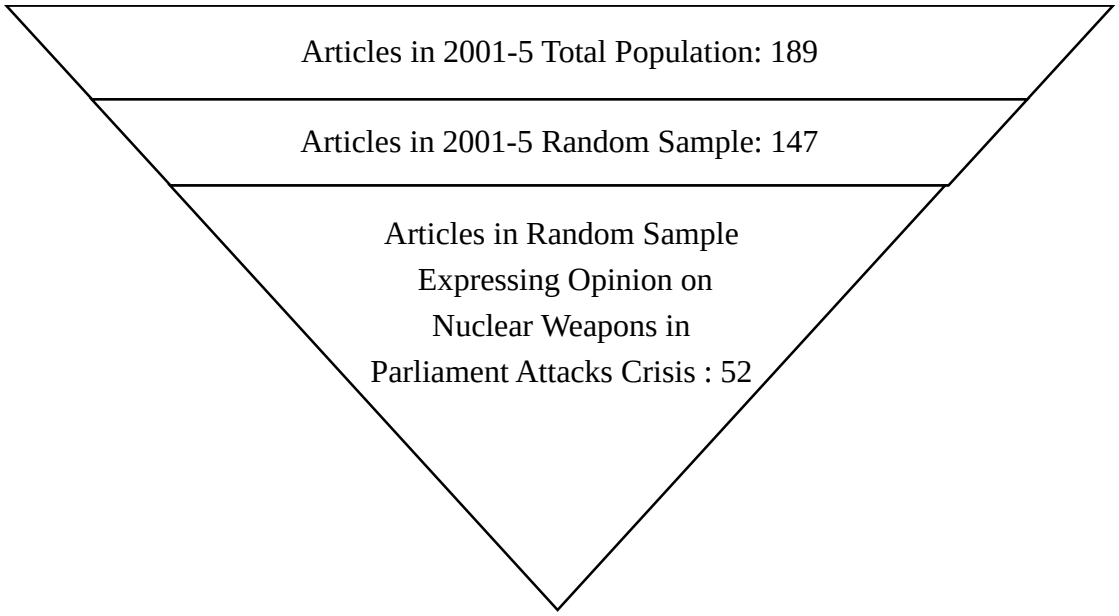
[176] Celia W. Dugger, "Group in Pakistan is Blamed by India for Suicide Raid", New York Times, December 15, 2001.

[177] Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, *U.S. Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis* (Washington DC: Stimson Center, 2006) p. 49.

[178] Ibid. p. 49.

Figure 14: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Nuclear Weapons in 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis



Of these fifty-two articles, not one recommended that nuclear weapons be used. However, there were signs that the absolute nuclear restraint that was the defining sentiment of the 1999 Kargil war discourse was eroding. The much greater number of articles citing nuclear weapons as a factor in this crisis – 52 compared to 12 for the Kargil discourse – highlighted that nuclear weapons were being more frequently and seriously discussed as part of the policy conversation on this crisis. The attitude score for articles expressing an opinion on the use of nuclear weapons in this episode, of **-0.77**, was also less than the **-1** score at the absolute pro-restraint pole of the opinion spectrum that the Kargil discourse adhered to.

Finally, one of the three policy options recommended by this discourse recommended Indian strikes within Pakistani territory, and took a remarkably cavalier attitude toward the risk of nuclear escalation inherent in this action in its reasoning for this response. While an overall pro-restraint sentiment continued to characterise the discourse, then, the level of public frustration at the continuing audacity of Pakistani provocations led to a greater appetite for a robust Indian military response, despite the nuclear risks.

5.3 Attitude Score

The attitude score for articles expressing an opinion on nuclear weapons in relation to the 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis was **-0.77**. With articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed from the calculation, the attitude score becomes **-0.8.** As shown in Table 13 below, this was a notably pro-restraint score, leaning strongly toward the pro-restraint end of the spectrum. This continued the trend we have seen so far of military crisis decisions generating more pro-restraint sentiments than those concentrating on abstract doctrinal points in a peacetime context. However, the pro-restraint opinions in this discourse were not as dominant as in the Kargil war discourse, highlighting comparative erosion in the strength of these sentiments and a greater desire to punish Pakistan regardless of potential nuclear implications.

Table 13: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-99 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**

Table 14: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.66**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.8**

5.4 Polarisation of Debate

The erosion of the absolute consensus in favour of restraint witnessed in the previous Kargil military crisis was also reflected in the polarisation index for this discourse. This discourse had a polarisation index of **0.62**, representing a fairly polarised discourse. With articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed from the calculation, the polarisation index becomes **0.61**. The overwhelming concentration of pro-restraint arguments in the Kargil discourse, with a dominant sentiment that India had too much to lose in reputational and physical costs should it act aggressively in a nuclear environment, was now being diluted by a countervailing wish to teach Pakistan a lesson regardless of these potential costs. A comparison of this polarisation index with previous indices is provided in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-99 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.74**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.62**

Table 16: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.76**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.61**

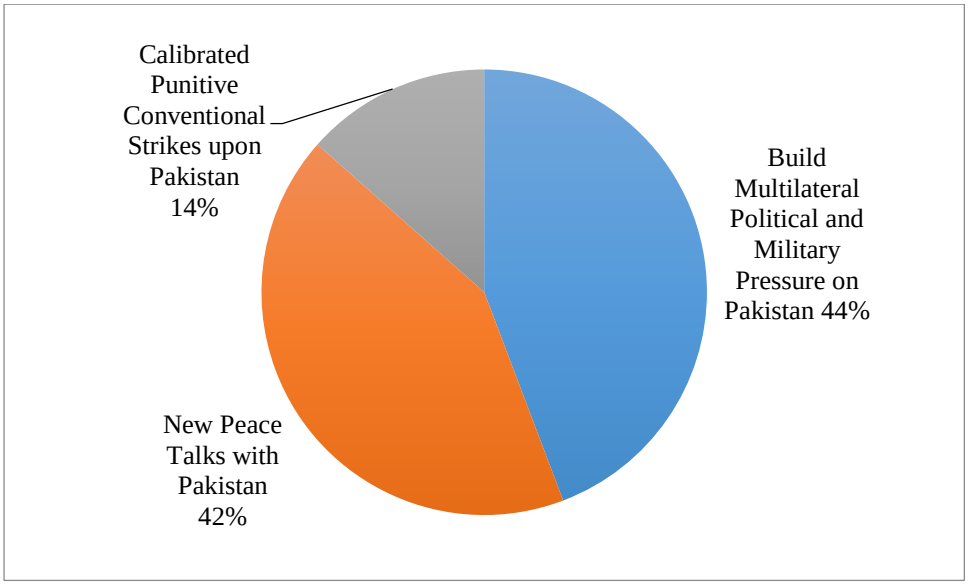
5.5 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

The contrast with the consensus that characterised the Kargil debate was also illuminated in the range of policy options promoted in this discourse for how India should respond to the

December 2001 Parliament attacks. While the Kargil war discourse had featured two similar policy options – both arguing for evicting Pakistani forces solely by conventional means, with the difference being one option then also promoting a push for nuclear disarmament – this discourse developed three truly conflicting options, as shown below.

This highlighted again the weakening of the pro-restraint sentiments compared to the Kargil case; the rising public frustration with Pakistan and desire to teach it a lesson generating a greater appetite for military adventurism; and a following reduction in the public fear of grave nuclear consequences for any robust Indian military responses to the Parliament attacks perpetrated by Pakistan-sponsored militants.

Figure 15: Policy Options Promoted in Discourse on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis



Two of the three policy options – multilateral political and military pressure upon Pakistan, and conventional strikes upon Pakistan – represented political and military escalatory measures in response to the Parliament attacks. These options together commanded nearly 60% of opinion within the discourse. This forms a major difference with the Kargil discourse, in which all contributors recommended limiting Indian operations to the lowest possible rung on the escalation ladder at all. The policy option most closely resembling that approach here was the second most popular measure, which wearily suggested new peace talks with Pakistan as the only long-term path to final peace. The reduction of support for this

perspective from 100% in the Kargil discourse to just over 40% here illustrated the lessened public fear of consequences from escalation in a tense nuclear rivalry, and greater appetite for punishing Pakistan regardless of these consequences.

Option 1: Build Multilateral Political and Military Pressure on Pakistan (44%)

This policy option, which attracted the most support of the three promoted within the discourse on possible responses to the Parliament attacks, recommended that India adopt a wide range of political and economic measures to isolate Pakistan and increase its reputational and economic costs, while complementing this with a greater military presence along the Line of Control to reduce militant incursions and amplify the sense of pressure to Islamabad. Simultaneously, the Indian government should launch an international campaign to ensure new multilateral sanctions against Pakistan, phrased in the new language of the global fight against terrorism. This multifaceted response, if successful, would greatly increase the costs to Pakistan and its degree of international isolation as a direct consequence of its sponsorship of anti-India militant groups. This option would generate politico-military pressure but avoid actual strikes, while emphasising multilateral diplomacy. Through this response, India could also demonstrate resolve while attempting to preserve its hard-fought international image, won in Kargil, as a responsible and restrained aspiring superpower.

However, it was undeniable that this approach did represent escalation of the conflict between India and Pakistan, and was thus a risky endeavour. Several articles promoting this policy openly admitted its potential to lead to war. A typical example is this recommendation by retired naval officer and defence analyst C. Uday Bhaskar:

> *"India has to evolve a calibrated and comprehensive strategy that includes incentives and penalties in political, economic and military terms to encourage Pakistan's military rulers to conform to the global benchmarks post September 11. The nuclear backdrop in the subcontinent is a reality but it cannot become a shield for Islamabad's recalcitrance and obduracy. If the entire gamut of politico-diplomatic and economic options are exhausted, then as part of this comprehensive*

strategy to counter terrorism and the Pakistan factor, India may have to exercise the military option - but it is neither the first nor the only option at this point in time."[179]

This framing highlighted how the experience of Kargil was changing Indian nuclear perceptions. The Kargil war had undermined popular Indian assumptions that a policy of overt nuclear deterrence, by introducing mutually assured destruction, would stabilise India-Pakistan relations and generate a sober moderation conducive to final peace talks. The Kargil discourse featured a shock that this sober moderation had not taken root in Islamabad, and that Pakistan was instead calculating that India would be self-deterred in the new nuclear environment against military escalation, creating room for Pakistani conventional military adventurism. With the Parliament attacks representing an even more audacious iteration of Kargil adventurism, the Indian response thus had to be more robust than before, and seek to raise costs to alter the cost-benefit calculation within Islamabad of pursuing these provocations. This reasoning, learning from the Kargil experience, is what underlay the statement: "*The nuclear backdrop in the subcontinent is a reality but it cannot become a shield for Islamabad's recalcitrance and obduracy".*

The second notable point in this article was its reference to *"global benchmarks post September 11".* This suggested that the new US-led international campaign against terrorism, given further credibility by supportive UN Security Council resolutions issued after the September 11 attacks and clout by the determined American strikes in nearby Afghanistan, represented an opportunity that India could grasp. Rather than seeking to win support for its case against that of Pakistan based upon rival claims, India could now portray its response as a logical part of the fight against terror and urge the world, and especially the US, to support it on these new grounds. Achieving this common worldview with Washington would be the keystone for this policy approach to succeed, as emphasised by a centrist newspaper editor:

"(India's) best bet is sufficient US pressure on Pakistan to make it stop sponsoring cross-border terrorism."[180]

[179] C. Uday Bhaskar, "Restraint, Not Revenge", Times of India, December 22, 2001.

[180] Sham Lal, "Options and Hunches", Telegraph, December 20, 2001.

However, while allying a terrorism-alert Washington to its cause was a crucial element of this multilateral pressure, it would best succeed if India could also enlist as many states as possible at the United Nations in service of this isolation and pressure strategy. Contributors particularly recommended that Indian diplomats focus upon building support for multilateral sanctions against Pakistan as a logical extension of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373 of September 2001, which aimed to criminalise terrorism in international law. This argument was mainly made by centrist newspaper editorials, but a more developed version was provided by a leftist *Frontline* journalist:

> *"This Resolution, framed under Article VII of the U.N. Charter, which makes compliance obligatory, requires states to 'refrain from providing any form of support... to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts', 'take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts', 'deny safe havens to those who finance, plan, support or commit terrorist acts', and 'prevent those who finance, plan, facilitate or commit terrorist acts from using their respective territories for those purposes against other states or their citizens'. Commentators, who have not been swept up by the belligerence of the military mobilisation, have urged this course of action, rather than an unfocussed series of armed strikes that would only compound a situation of radical instability in the region."*[181]

While recommending this multifaceted response of comprehensive diplomatic, military and economic pressure, which inherently entailed moving the crisis up the escalation ladder, analysts were nevertheless aware of the potential of this approach to spiral into war in a nuclear environment. A prominent defence commentator recognised this reality:

> *"The overarching worry is that in an act of desperation Pakistan may want to turn (any Indian counter-terrorist action) into a nuclear war…There is international support for action against terrorism. There is likely to be domestic support for stern measures…If Pakistan doesn't react to the demands, India may finally be forced to act."*[182]

[181] Sukumar Muralidharan, "Lacking in Strategy", Frontline, June 7, 2002.

[182] Raj Chengappa and Shishir Gupta, "In Cold Pursuit", India Today, December 24, 2001.

Articles recommending this policy option were principally centrist newspaper editorials and contributions by retired military officials and defence analysts. A lesser concentration was by leftist journalists writing in *Frontline*. As the most numerically popular policy option, this approach also thus attracted support from a wide breadth of the political spectrum, with the only gap in its support consisting of overtly pro-BJP and hawkish defence analysts.

Option 2: New Peace Talks with Pakistan (42%)

This was the second most popular policy option, but authors making this case admitted it was a tough sell to the cauldron of raw public anger in India following the Parliament attacks. These articles, most closely echoing the tenor of the Kargil discourse of the three policy options here, argued that any escalation of the conflict with Pakistan in a nuclear environment was too grave a risk to be contemplated. While the Parliament atrocity was indeed shocking, more lives and economic opportunities would be sacrificed by moving India and Pakistan closer to war through the isolation-and-pressure approach of Option 1 or worse. Placing the nuclear risks of any escalation at the foreground of discussion was the core theme of articles in this category. A typical example was provided by a prominent pro-Congress commentator:

> *"It will take approximately five minutes for two million Indians and Pakistanis to perish in a nuclear holocaust on the outbreak of nuclear hostilities. The international community — read the United States of America — is, therefore, urging us to forgo the military option and move to the negotiating table. Pakistan — in a sense — is prepared to do so. We are not."*[183]

The articles also took as their target the growing confidence within the Indian discourse, represented in Option 1 but most starkly in Option 3, that India had ample room within the conventional-military threshold to conduct military movements and even strikes against Pakistan before reaching nuclear thresholds. This, these articles argued, was a dangerous assumption to harbour. Even if war was not ultimately intended as an outcome of this approach, as tensions increased, so did the risk of accidental movements or signals being

[183] Mani Shankar Aiyar, "Futile Gestures", Telegraph, May 21, 2002.

misread and leading to war in a nuclear region. An article by a Washington-based nonproliferation expert made this point:

> *"Confident Indian predictions that the nuclear threshold will not be crossed in case of another war presume that both adversaries are following the same script, that command and control arrangements will hold, and that accidents will not happen. Yet, every war on the subcontinent has been marked by costly miscalculations and unpleasant surprises...Far more meaningful would be unilateral, collaborative or cooperative measures that would confirm the closure of camps and staging areas for infiltration. Parallel Indo-US surveillance could serve these purposes."*[184]

This article, in common with others in this category, sought to undermine arguments for the ability of an escalatory strategy to compel long-term Pakistani concessions, while building confidence in the capacity of peace talks at this juncture to achieve the same goal. Indeed, the caution toward Pakistan that animated articles in this category frequently urged the need for de-escalation of any potentially aggressive Indian movements, regardless of any hope of changing Pakistan's cost-benefit calculus in general. This was highlighted in an apprehensive *Telegraph* editorial:

> *"New Delhi must also be prepared to consider imaginative steps to build confidence on the line of control. The recent crisis has generated fears worldwide about the possibility of a nuclear war…India must also engage with proposals, including those made by other countries, which could help generate greater stability in the region."*[185]

The focus on de-escalation and nuclear risk reduction thus led this article to recommend that India develop confidence-building measures along its border with Pakistan as a response to a horrific attack on the heart of its government by Pakistan-sponsored groups. This highlighted the problem with this policy option of the rising public anger with Pakistan that demanded an outlet in policy.

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[184] Michael Krepon, "No Easy Exits", India Today, June 10, 2002.

[185] Editorial, "Easing it Slowly", Telegraph, June 13, 2002.

Another theme of these articles were to target not just the risks of escalation, but its pointlessness. Escalation would bring India and Pakistan closer to the brink of war, reduce investor and general economic confidence in India, and threaten India's reputation as a responsible actor. If escalation provoked counter-escalation from Pakistan, what sort of gains could ever amount from this approach? A pessimistic analysis along these lines was produced by a retired Army officer and defence analyst:

> *"New Delhi's war options against Pakistan are thus limited by the presence of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent. There is a group of strategists which recommends "salami slicing" as a war option. This implies that India captures small slivers of Pakistani territory through a series of small wars. This overlooks the fact that by this approach India would be fighting a number of small wars for a long time to come. That would still not force a change of policy on Musharraf's part. Thus New Delhi may find itself left with its army deployed on the border, and unable to force an outcome."*[186]

These articles were therefore closest in their recommendations to the dominant pro-restraint sentiments of the preceding Kargil discourse. These both emphasised the towering risks of any military escalation of tensions with Pakistan in a nuclear environment, and demanded de-escalation and urgent peace initiatives as the geopolitically safest and fastest route to a final peace. However, the fact that support for these opinions had previously formed the entirety of the Kargil discourse, but now only accounted for around 40% of this Parliament attacks discourse, highlighted the shift toward a greater desire to punish Pakistan regardless of these risks in this episode.

The political support base for articles recommending this policy option also mainly consisted of pro-Congress, leftist and anti-nuclear authors, with a smaller concentration of retired Pakistani officials or Pakistani editors calling for peace. As well as the thrust of these arguments being out of sync with the greater overall public appetite for action against Pakistan, their origins in an array of adversaries of the BJP-led government would further reduce its likely receptivity to this strand of opinion.

[186] V.R. Raghavan, "Season for War Games", Telegraph, August 8, 2002.

Option 3: Calibrated Punitive Conventional Strikes Upon Pakistan (14%)

This option was notable even for its presence in the discourse. Its inclusion as a prominent recommendation in the discourse, focused on taking the fight to Pakistan forces and territory, marked the largest change from the cautious, restrained Kargil discourse. As well as the difference in public anger with Pakistan from the Kargil episode, this policy option shared with Option 1 an increased confidence that India could launch conventional strikes against Pakistan without reaching nuclear thresholds. By comparison, participants in the Kargil discourse were concerned with the costs to India's image of restraint by even seriously talking about such a course of action in a nuclear environment. A blunt example of the new military confidence was provided by a hawkish pro-BJP defence analyst:

> *"India will never undertake a full-fledged war against Pakistan. There is no need for it. Punitive actions which impose maximum damage on the Pakistan army and ISI (intelligence services) will do the job. Despite the recent acquisition of arms from US and China, Pak doesn't have the capacity to face a full-fledged war now as they are already under pressure...I don't think either side will use nuclear weapons. If Pakistan uses them it'll be annihilated by the Indian response."*[187]

This confidence emanated from two new assumptions. The first was that Pakistan possessed neither the capability to dispel an Indian conventional offensive, as it had to maintain forces on its border with Pakistan combined with its traditional military manpower disparity with India. The sense that India briefly enjoyed space, defined both in time and on the escalatory ladder, within which it could strike Pakistan and suffer minimal consequences, was shown in the above assertion: *"Pak doesn't have the capacity to face a full-fledged war now as they are already under pressure".*

The sense of available space on the escalation ladder was further developed by a hawkish retired ambassador and prominent foreign policy commentator:

> *"General V.P. Malik, former army chief, has talked about the strategic space between a low intensity conflict and a nuclear war. It is this space India needs to*

[187] Brahma Chellaney, "Punitive Action Will be Enough", Times of India, December 23, 2001.

look at…The attack on Parliament is a challenge to India's sovereignty and its ability to govern. Our response shouldn't convey an impression of weakness."[188]

In case there were any remaining doubts about the ability of India to maintain control of escalation with Pakistan within this *"space between a low intensity conflict and a nuclear war",* the second assumption came into play. This was that, given the substantial American military presence in South Asia as part of the Afghanistan campaign, Washington would naturally intervene to end an India-Pakistan war before it escalated toward the nuclear threshold. This, in effect, meant India could strike with impunity as it could leave responsibility for de-escalation to Washington. Another element of this assumption was that the closer US-Pakistan strategic coordination after September 11 would make substantial escalatory moves nearly unthinkable for Islamabad. Defence analyst K. Subrahmanyam outlined this perspective:

"India has pledged a no-first-use policy in respect of nuclear weapons. Invariably, all analysts predicting use of nuclear weapons in Indo-Pakistani conflicts talk about a Pakistan, facing a disastrous defeat, being forced to resort to nuclear weapons…that situation is unlikely to arise...the Indian armed forces are sensitive to tolerance limits of Pakistan and are not likely to force it into a situation where it would have to consider the use of nuclear weapons. Above all, the presence of the US fleet in the Arabian Sea is the guarantor that nuclear weapons would not be used by Pakistan."[189]

These two assumptions – that India could strike Pakistan with impunity as Pakistan was constrained both by its need to maintain forces on borders with Afghanistan and India and by its traditional manpower disparity with India; and that the United States would ultimately ensure any Indian attack did not have nuclear consequences – highlighted the substantial difference of this crisis discourse from that of Kargil. While this strand of opinion was still the least popular in the Parliament attacks discourse, with 14% of participants supporting it, it still formed part of a pro-escalatory majority combined with the isolation-and-pressure

[188] G. Parthasarathy, "Middle Path", India Today, December 24, 2001.

[189] K. Subrahmanyam, "U.S. Presence in Arabian Sea Makes Indo-Pak N-Conflict Unlikely", Times of India, January 2, 2002.

approach of Option 1. The desire to punish Pakistan, overriding the extreme caution of the Kargil discourse, is indeed what distinguishes this overall discourse. The public anger at the horrific Parliament attacks, and wish to ensure Pakistan paid a visible cost for these, was shared by no less than a former Prime Minister, V.P. Singh:

> *"If we decide to cross over in hot pursuit and find that the terrorist camps have been moved to Baluchistan, this means we will have to go through Pakistan to strike at them. This will obviously mean a war with Pakistan. The government will then have to decide whether this will be a conventional war or a nuclear war...We should go in for strong, punitive action."*[190]

Authors in this category principally consisted of retired military officials, hawkish defence analysts, and a pro-BJP commentator. Of the political support bases for each of the three options promoted in this discourse, this was the most pro-BJP constellation. However, it still formed the least popular option, and one which encompassed very little centrist opinion.

5.6 Summary

This crisis, with a strike at the heart of India's government and the second major provocative Pakistani act in under two years, was viewed as substantially different in this discourse compared to the Kargil episode. The absolute consensus in the Kargil episode in favour of restraint had been demonstrated by an attitude score of -1, at the extreme pole of the nuclear restraint/maximal policy spectrum, and a polarisation index of 0, signifying total consensus on a pro-restraint approach. This was further reflected in the specific policy options promoted within the discourse, which all recommended extreme caution and peaceably restoring the situation to the status quo, so as to safeguard India from marching up the nuclear escalation ladder and to burnish its global image as a responsible power.

This second, more audacious strike, at a much more emotional and symbolic location, corroded this pro-restraint consensus. The adherence of the Parliament attacks discourse to pro-restraint arguments weakened to -0.77, highlighting the emergence of a constituency in

[190] V.P. Singh, "The Debate", Times of India, December 23, 2001.

the discourse supportive of maximal nuclear policy arguments in solving the crisis. In comparison to the complete consensus of the Kargil discourse, this discourse now recorded a polarisation index of 0.62, a more polarised result, and more divided even than on the question of moving to overt nuclear deterrence in 1997-8. A notable appetite for aggressive, escalatory policy in response to this crisis, entirely absent in the Kargil episode, therefore characterised this discourse.

This theme was further illuminated by the three policy options recommended by the discourse. Two of these options – to launch a multifaceted politico-military campaign to raise military pressure on Pakistan while building an international coalition to politically and economically isolate it; and to launch conventional strikes – were deliberately escalatory actions, and accounted for just under 60% of the balance of opinion within the discourse. This was a dramatic shift from the complete absence of escalatory recommendations in the Kargil episode.

Lines of reasoning that were new to this discourse supported these two options. Rather than an overriding concern for India's image of restraint and fear of the nuclear consequences of any bold moves against Pakistan that were the dominant sentiments of the Kargil discourse, three new assumptions provided the supporting framework for this escalatory majority. For the most popular option, to isolate and pressure Pakistan, commentators felt that Indian diplomats could win international allies to this cause by framing Pakistan as an adversary to the post-September 11 global campaign against terrorism. For the more aggressive option of direct strikes, a remarkable new confidence in the ability of the Indian government to control all potential implications was built upon assumptions that Pakistan was too conventionally overstretched to repel limited Indian strikes, and that the United States would prevent any escalation to the nuclear level.

The second most popular option, and the strand of discourse that most closely carried over from the Kargil body of opinon, was to avoid such temptations to teach Pakistan a lesson and instead launch a new peace drive. Only peace talks would eventuate in a long-term India-Pakistan settlement; ratcheting up military and political pressure against Islamabad would only impose economic and political costs upon India, and risked war for no real gains. The reduction of support for this approach to just over 40% here, from forming the entire perspective of the Kargil discourse, and the strong appetite for some form of escalatory action

represented by the majority of the discourse, placed pressure on the government to be seen to be punishing Pakistan rather than responding to the terror strike with an olive branch. This highlighted the extent to which the nuclear restraint of the Kargil discourse was eroding, and indeed could not be taken as a given.

5.7 Selecting an Option

With an aggressive, escalatory approach focused on punishing Pakistan attracting the support of just under 60% of the discourse, and the Parliament attacks representing a more audacious iteration of the Kargil mould of Pakistan-sponsored attacks well beneath the nuclear threshold, it was likely that the government would select an escalatory policy option based upon the previous pattern of correlation with the discourse. Of the two escalatory options developed in the discourse, that recommending direct strikes was only supported by 14% of commentators and did not feature a particularly broad political base, being limited to pro-BJP authors and hawkish defence analysts and not substantially including centrist opinion.

The second escalatory approach, of refraining from direct strikes but launching a comprehensive international drive to politically and economically isolate Pakistan, while building military pressure to hopefully change its cost-benefit calculus in supporting further Parliament attacks, was more likely to be adopted and indeed was the approach that the Indian government selected. This was numerically the most popular option; formed part of the escalatory, aggressive majority in the discourse; and enjoyed a far broader political support base, drawing from a wide range of centrist newspaper editorials and opinion, defence analysts, retired military officials, and even leftist commentators. As we have seen in the previous discourses, a numerically popular policy option with a centrist support base was likely to resemble the ultimate policy, and this case was no different.

The second most popular policy option, for new peace talks, was unlikely to resemble ultimate government policy for several reasons. Responding to a brutal attack on the nation's Parliament with an olive branch would be immensely difficult for the government to pursue without suffering grave domestic political costs, given the following public appetite for punishing Pakistan. Compounding this problem was the fact that the constituencies advocating this new peace drive in the discourse were those least likely to obtain the

government's ear. These formed an array of dedicated critics of the BJP-led government's policy agenda, composed of pro-Congress, anti-nuclear and leftist commentators, with a lesser concentration of Pakistani editors and retired officers. Combined with the relative absence of centrist support from this option compared to the isolate-and-pressure approach, it looked very unlikely that this recommendation would be adopted.

Indeed, the government response most closely resembled the the isolate-and-pressure approach of Option 1. No deliberate coordinated crossborder strikes as recommended by Option 3 were undertaken, and the government instead began putting in place the major elements of the comprehensive aggressive containment of Option 1.[191] New Delhi immediately demanded that Pakistan shut down the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba groups operating from its soil, and began a large-scale mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of troops and direction of these closer to the Pakistan border. Its bilateral communication with Islamabad also included demands that Pakistan cease any civilian overflights of Indian territory and reduce the staffing at its embassy in New Delhi. India furthermore cut all train and bus links with Pakistan. In response, Pakistan began amassing its own forces along the border, including movement of nuclear-capable missiles.[192] As the crisis progressed and both sides followed the escalatory logic of Option 1, both states withdrew their ambassadors and further augmented their forces along the border.

The international diplomatic dimension that was intrinsic to Option 1 was also followed by New Delhi. When issuing its demands to Pakistan that it shutter the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed militant organisations, New Delhi sent a portfolio of evidence on these groups to several other states.[193] Its diplomacy with Washington hammered a message of anti-terrorism, reflecting the call within Option 1 arguments for the government to take advantage of the new American focus on terrorism following September 11 in how it portrayed Pakistan. This message was then reflected in Washington's bilateral diplomacy

[191] There were limited, isolated skirmishes during this crisis to evict Pakistani intruders from Indian territory, as noted in Arjun Subramanian, "From Kargil to Parakram, A Lesson in Forceful Persuasion", The Hindu, July 27, 2012. However, these did not cross the border nor form the principal Indian response in the crisis, as commentators advocating for Option 3 recommended.

[192] "India and Pakistan: Who Will Strike First?", The Economist, December 20, 2001.

[193] Ibid.

with Islamabad, urging President Musharraf to demonstrate he was cracking down on terrorist groups based within Pakistan.[194]

The government also aligned with Option 1 in campaigning at the UN to isolate Pakistan based upon a reading of UN Security Council 1373. Speaking before the Security Council in January 2002, the Indian Permanent Representative called for stronger international sanctions based upon Resolution 1373 and linked the Parliament attacks atrocity to this call.[195] The discourse had recommended that this campaign be expanded as an alternative to direct strikes.

As forces steadily built along the border, the crisis reached a crescendo in May 2002. Pakistan-sponsored militants attacked an Indian Army base at Kaluchak in Kashmir, killing 31. The government further augmented its force buildup and both sides withdrew their ambassadors. However, the international diplomatic outreach and absence of direct strikes that was the hallmark of Option 1 still continued. American mediation helped end the crisis, securing a pledge from Musharraf in June 2002 that he would work to end anti-India militant groups operating across the Pakistan border.[196] New Delhi allowed Pakistani civilian overflights to resume following this pledge, and as tensions began to slowly dissipate, publicly announced the end of this standoff in October 2002 and the gradual demobilisation of forces along the border.

Just as the discourses on Kargil and the Parliament attacks had dramatically differed in their balances of caution and aggression, so too did the government responses to this crisis. Although Indian forces did not cross the border in both cases, New Delhi here was far more willing to ratchet up political, economic and military pressure upon Pakistan with less concern for how these actions might escalate. This approach was comprehensive enough to lead Western governments to remove diplomatic staffs from India and Pakistan in June 2002

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[194] Nayak and Krepon, *Crisis Management*, pp. 23-25.

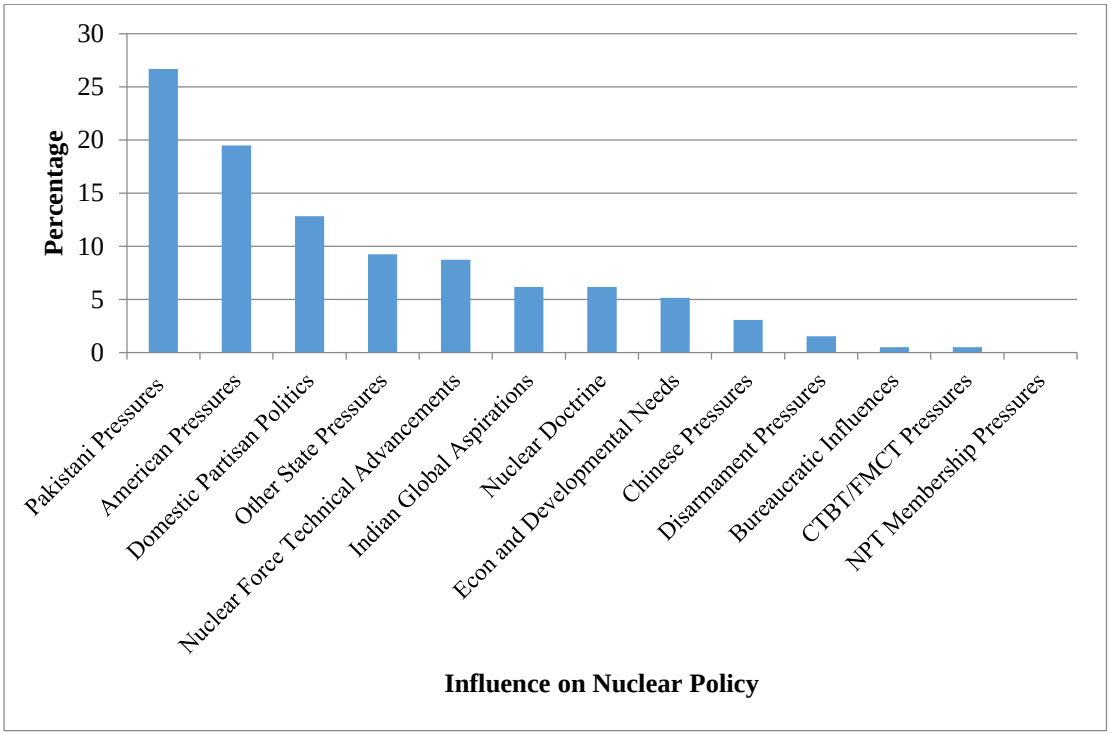
[195] *Statement by Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Permanent Representative on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts in the Security Council on January 18, 2002* (New York: Permanent Mission of Republic of India to the United Nations, 2002), available at https://www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/43700ind575.pdf

[196] Zachary S. Davis, "Introduction" in Zachary S. Davis (ed.) *The India-Pakistan Military Standoff: Crisis and Escalation in South Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) pp. 12-13.

due to their fears of escalation. The erosion of restraint that we saw in this discourse was reflected in official policy, as this policy closely correlated with the comprehensive containment, amplified by an international diplomatic campaign to isolate campaign, of Option 1.

5.8 Issues Cited in Discourse on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis

Figure 16: Issues Cited in Discourse on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis



The salient issues in the Kargil conflict had reflected the principally domestic debates on which strategy would best utilise Indian capabilities in conformity with its value of restraint. However, the greater diplomatic involvement of other states in this crisis, and corresponding greater prominence assigned in this discourse to global diplomatic outreach as a key element of India's response to the Parliament attacks, was reflected in the ordering of the top four most salient issues here. Given the similar origins of this crisis and that of Kargil, Pakistan retained the same position as in the Kargil episode as the most cited influence. The higher salience of Indian international diplomacy in this crisis was reflected in the ranking of American Pressures at second most cited and Other State Pressures as fourth. This displaced

the domestic influences of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements (at second in the Kargil episode) to fifth most cited here, and of Nuclear Doctrine (fourth in Kargil) to joint sixth here.

Domestic Partisan Politics retained its same position as third most cited influence here. This showed that the domestic political context in forming a response commensurate to both the situation and India's perceived image and values was still viewed as crucial to policymaking. However, this was now part of a greater focus on the international context, rather than being the primary prism through which the crisis was viewed as in the Kargil episode.

Table 17: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-0.59
Indian Global Aspirations	-0.75
American Pressures	-0.76
Pakistani Pressures	-0.77
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Use of Nuclear Weapons in Parliament Attacks Crisis	*-0.77*
Chinese Pressures	-0.83
Other State Pressures	-0.89
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.92
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.92
Bureaucratic Influences	-1
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	-1
Disarmament Pressures	-1
Economic and Developmental Needs	-1
NPT Membership Pressures	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*

A second table is provided below with articles coded as ‘0’ (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed. This leaves only articles coded as‘-1’ or ‘1,’ for pro-restraint and maximalist views respectively. The exclusion of ‘0’ articles has the effect of moving most attitude scores for a perceived influence on nuclear policy further into the pro-restraint column.

Table 18: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis, Excluding Articles with ‘0’ Coding

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	-0.62
American Pressures	-0.78
Pakistani Pressures	-0.8
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Use of Nuclear Weapons in Parliament Attacks Crisis	*-0.8*
Indian Global Aspirations	-0.82
Chinese Pressures	-0.83
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.83
Other State Pressures	-0.88
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.92
Bureaucratic Influences	-1
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	-1
Disarmament Pressures	-1
Economic and Developmental Needs	-1
NPT Membership Pressures	*(Not cited in discourse/no score)*

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Given the nature of this crisis, every article cited Pakistani pressures as an influence. The public frustration at the continued attacks by Pakistan-sponsored militant groups on Indian forces and territory, crystallised by this new attack on perhaps India's most sensitive target, was reflected clearly in the presentation of Pakistan in this discourse. The main framing of Pakistan here was either in terms of a desperate search to find the space between its conventional and nuclear thresholds within which India could safely take a measure of revenge; and of sheer frustration that India remained territorially joined to such an irresponsible nuclear rival and had been forced into this dilemma.[197]

However, the risks of such actions, and realisation that India was stuck with Pakistan regardless of what it did, animated the second main framing of Pakistan in this discourse: a weary recognition that India could not choose its neighbours, and that war or militarised brinkmanship would not solve things.[198]

This line of thought underlay the arguments for Option 2, to launch new peace talks with Pakistan as the only realistic means of ending its geopolitical rivalry with India.[199] Nevertheless, this still remained the minority presentation, and the emergence of a majority in the discourse willing to set aside such caution and give Pakistan a bloody nose was the most notable aspect of the framing of this issue here.

Issue: American Pressures

The Kargil crisis had been viewed within that discourse as primarily a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan, with the importance of the United States to the crisis being relegated to the position of joint last most cited influence. The substantial new American military presence in Afghanistan, and the greater emphasis here on liaison with Washington

[197] Kapil Kak, "Raise the Stakes", India Today, December 24, 2001.

[198] Editorial, "From the Editor-in-Chief", India Today, June 10, 2002.

[199] Praful Bidwai, "The Dogs of War", Frontline, January 18, 2002.

as an essential element of any Indian response to this crisis, was highlighted by American Pressures moving upward to the second most cited issue.

A new assumption in this crisis was that the United States would automatically intervene to halt any India-Pakistan hostilities before these reached the nuclear level. This background reality allowed India to ratchet up pressure upon Pakistan, safe in the knowledge that any escalatory implications of this would presumably be handled by Washington and not redound to New Delhi. A common framing of the United States in the discourse urged the Indian government to win Washington to its side, while utilising the American presence and common anti-terror worldview as a shield for raising pressure on Pakistan.[200]

A second common framing was of the United States as a valuable mediator in the crisis. With good relations with both New Delhi and Islamabad, and the political and military clout to compel Pakistan to end its provocative activities, Washington's role was viewed as a crucial aspect of how the crisis would evolve and be resolved. This became exaggerated among some in the peace talks category of Option 2, who had greater confidence in the ability of the American government to secure a peaceful resolution to the crisis than that of India.[201]

While a confidence in the ability of Washington to prevent a Pakistani nuclear response to any Indian actions underpinned the widespread belief that India could safely escalate the crisis and punish Pakistan, the anti-terrorism focus of American foreign policy following September 11 also offered a potential common ground that would help India win it to its side. This was the root of the recommendation within Option 1 arguments that India frame its diplomacy in the language of the global fight against terror. However, the emerging new principle of preventive war to stop likely terrorist attacks could also be used by New Delhi should it wish to cross the border.[202]

The United States had therefore a much larger presence in the crisis compared to Kargil, and American involvement was viewed as an essential factor in how it would end. However, this influence was framed in two principal ways: Washington as indispensible mediator who India

[200] Editorial, "War Against Reason", Times of India, December 27, 2001.

[201] Jairam Ramesh, "13/12 and the US", India Today, December 24, 2001.

[202] Singh, "The Debate".

should appeal to, and as enabler of bold Indian actions to punish Pakistan through its supposed ability to painlessly halt any conflict before it reached the nuclear level. These assumptions, largely missing in the Kargil discourse, may have partly accounted for the more aggressive Indian response in this episode.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

A slight majority of articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics as an influence on policy supported peace talks over the other two options promoted in the discourse. This contrasts with the citation rates of the above two influences, which align with the overall balance of support for the three policy options in this discourse. This difference reflects the main point of articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics as an issue, which was to critically observe that the ruling BJP-led government was clearly seeking to reap domestic partisan advantage in how it responded to the crisis.[203] Also, some articles did not limit their criticism only to the BJP. A *Times of India* editorial noted the degree of domestic tension and public anger in the crisis, and called for parliamentary consensus in evolving an Indian response.[204]

However, not all articles made this point for political moderation, and a minority of contributions citing Domestic Partisan Politics argued that a horrific attack on India's parliament that could not be simply ignored.[205] The variance in these opinions highlighted the scale of divisions in the discourse on this crisis compared to the Kargil episode.

The principal presentation of this issue was by those in the peace talks category, to call for the government to develop a more moderate policy toward Pakistan that refrained from stirring up nationalist sentiments with an eye toward electoral advantage. The average attitude score of -0.92 for articles citing Domestic Partisan Politics, very close to the absolute pro-restraint pole of -1 and the first to substantially differ from the overall attitude score for this discourse of -0.77, further reflected this tendency.

[203] Saswati Chanda and Alok K. Gupta, "It Pays to be Friends", Telegraph, August 27, 2002.

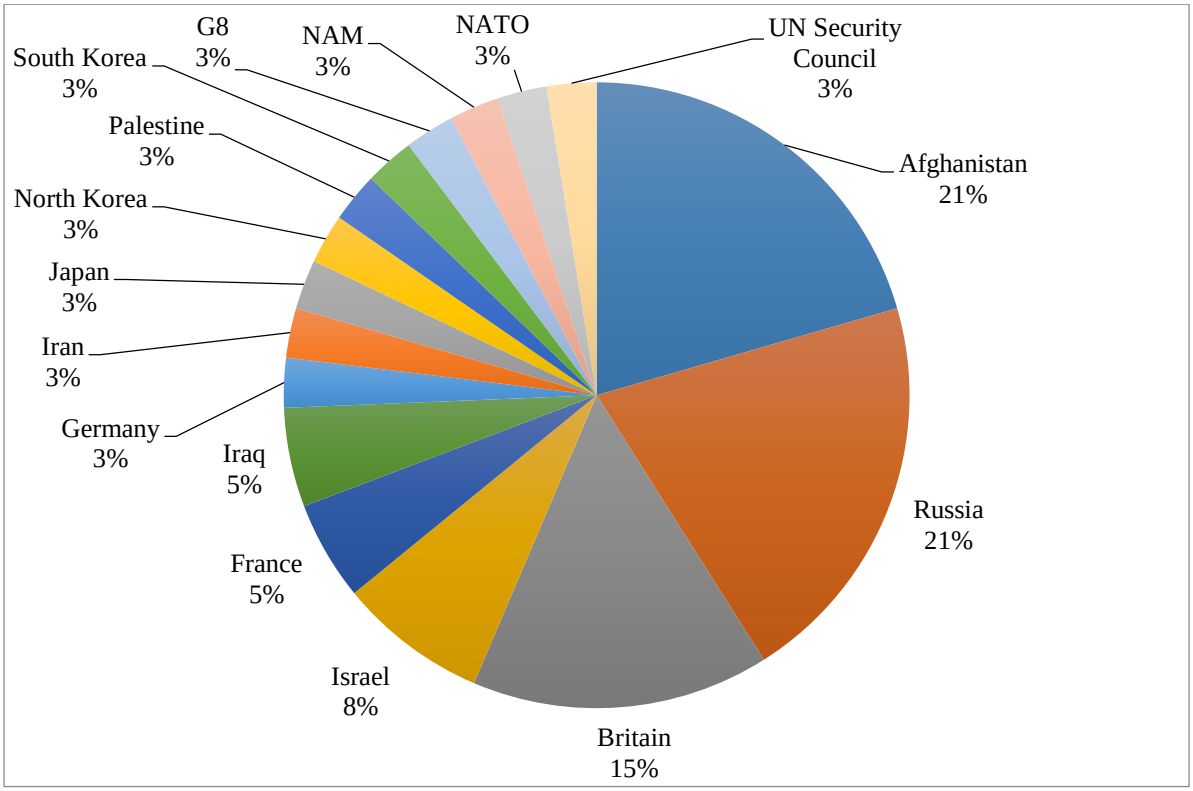
[204] Editorial, "Competitive Jingoism", Times of India, May 30, 2002.

[205] K.P. Nayar, "Firmly on Course", Telegraph, December 28, 2001.

Issue: Other State Pressures

States outside the major three – the United States, China, and Pakistan – served as the fourth most cited issue in this discourse, the highest salience to which this influence has risen to in our study so far. This reflects the elevated importance assigned to diplomatic outreach and the international context in this discourse. The balance of support for policy options among articles citing Other State Pressures as an influence demonstrated a slight overweighting of support for Option 1 isolate-and-pressure arguments, again highlighting the intrinsic importance to this option of international diplomacy to help contain Pakistan.

Figure 17: Additional States Cited as Influences in Discourse on 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis



The ascension of Afghanistan to joint most cited state in this category, where previously it was one of the minor background elements of overviews of the international context, reflects the changes to the regional environment wrought by the new American military campaign

there. Afghanistan was presented as relevant to this crisis in two main ways: with the American presence there as an essential aspect to be considered in how adventurous India's response should be; and as the anti-terrorist reasoning underpinning the American campaign there as a possible precedent that India could follow in launching operations against Pakistan. This first framing was the most popular, and the second was deployed only to justify building containment of Pakistan rather than cross-border strikes. This reflects the overall pro-restraint score of -0.89 for articles citing Other State Pressures.

Russia, as the other joint most cited state, reappeared in its familiar role, along with France and Britain, as world powers calling upon India to show restraint in how it responded. The cases of Israel, Palestine, Iraq and Iran were mentioned to discuss and dismiss the possibility of robust Israel-style crossborder strikes against Pakistan, given the comparative strength of Pakistan to India as compared to the disparity between Israel and Palestinian militants, and the dangers of adopting an American preventive war doctrine in India's stance toward Pakistan when this was currently threatening dangerous new wars against Iran and Iraq. The principal focus of articles citing Other State Pressures was therefore to recommend diplomatic liaison with these states to support measures to contain Pakistan, with examples of other states mentioned as precedents to warn against attempting anything more aggressive.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

The influence of India's nuclear force capabilities on its response to the Parliament attacks declined to fifth most cited issue here, from second most cited in the Kargil discourse. This reflects the much greater overall concern in the Kargil discourse of nuclear escalation of any provocative Indian actions, highlighting the much larger shadow the Indian bomb cast over that debate. The remarkable new confidence seen in the Parliament attacks discourse of the ability of the Indian government to find room on the escalation ladder to strike Pakistan without stimulating a Pakistani nuclear response diminished the perceived relevance of the Indian bomb in considering its options. One author was even entirely unfazed by the prospect of nuclear escalation, arguing India's superior nuclear capabilities would prevail in a nuclear war.[206]

[206] Chellaney, "Punitive Action Will be Enough".

While this was the only article in this category that was unworried by a Pakistani nuclear strike, there was a notable constituency of pro-maximal nuclear policy articles, supporting the Option 1 isolate-and-pressure and Option 3 conventional strikes policy proposals that cited Nuclear Force Technical Advancements to support their arguments. While articles citing this issue overall preferred Option 2, for peace talks, in the greatest number, this unique concentration of hawkish articles in discussion of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements accounts for articles citing this issue recording the least pro-restraint score of all, of -0.588.

However, a majority of articles citing this influence still held the same critical, fearful view of the implications of the Indian bomb as had characterised the Kargil discourse. The difference with the presentation of this issue in the Kargil discourse is that the overwhelming fear of escalation in the former episode was now being visibly contested by a new constituency that felt that provocative Indian strikes on Pakistan were possible and that Pakistan would be deterred from responding by fear of India's nuclear force. Combined with this influence attracting the least pro-restraint score in the discourse, this demonstrated a new current of maximalist nuclear thought gaining support in this episode.

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

Indian Global Aspirations and its perceived international image declined to joint sixth most cited issue here from joint fifth in the Kargil discourse. The balance of support for policy options among articles discussing Indian Global Aspirations featured an overweighting in favour of the Option 1 isolate-and-pressure approach and a minority in favour of Option 2, for peace talks. No articles promoting Option 3, for conventional strikes, cited this issue, highlighting the extent to which the effects of such actions on India's image were dismissed as irrelevant among these authors. This complete absence of citation by articles supporting one of the major policy options explains the slight decline of this issue in the hierarchy of relevant influences, and is a facet of the increased hawkishness and desire for revenge in this discourse compared to Kargil.

The dominant framing of this issue was to acknowledge that India's global image of restraint was real and should be protected in how it responded, which ruled out direct strikes.

However, this image could be utilised to continue to win allies to its side in pressuring Pakistan, and further call attention to the irresponsible behaviour of the latter.[207]

By refraining from direct strikes, but taking political and defence measures to raise costs for Pakistan, these arguments went, India could respond to the crisis without sacrificing its image or risking major war. However, the minority of articles citing this issue in favour of supporting peace talks portrayed India and Pakistan as similar nuclear-armed aggressors locked in a dangerous conflict spiral, and that proceeding with the above approach would threaten India's image of restraint more than supporters of the isolate-and-pressure camp realised. Still, the dominant presentation of this issue, of India's image of restraint being accommodative enough of an effort to raise political and military pressure on Pakistan, reflected the greater confidence in India's ability to safely push Pakistan to the brink that characterised this Parliament attacks discourse.

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

Nuclear Doctrine as an influence was the joint sixth most cited issue in this discourse, a decline from fourth in the Kargil discourse. This was for similar reasons as the parallel decline of Indian global aspirations as an issue: the increased confidence of commentators in the ability of India to escalate the Parliament crisis in order to secure concessions with Pakistan, while still stopping short of the nuclear threshold. As this line of thinking suggested India would be able to fully control the escalation ladder, nuclear doctrinal implications held less relevance than previously as these would not come into play.

The articles that did cite nuclear doctrinal issues were thus those that disagreed with this approach, and were principally supporters of the Option 2 peace talks proposal. This constituency also accounts for the very pro-restraint -0.92 overall attitude score for articles citing this issue. The majority framing of this influence was to emphasise the post-1998 nuclear environment of South Asia; call attention to the need to adhere to the restraint

[207] Bhaskar, "Restraint, Not Revenge".

measures codified in India's 1999 nuclear doctrine; and warn of the real risks of brinkmanship in the nuclear context.[208]

However, the small minority of articles that cited nuclear doctrine to support the Option 1 isolate-and-pressure approach highlighted the mismatch between the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan. India's no-first-use doctrine meant that New Delhi would never authorise a nuclear strike as a response to conventional escalation. While Pakistan's nuclear doctrine was more flexible, making it more likely that it would issue the first nuclear strike, the United States would intervene before this happened.[209] Nevertheless, this line of argument was still in a minority of those citing this issue.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

Economic and Developmental Needs formed the seventh most cited influence in this discourse. The average attitude score of -1, at the absolute pro-restraint pole of the opinion spectrum, highlighted the tendency of this issue to be cited by articles arguing for a minimal or zero nuclear role in the crisis. The dominant form of its representation was to emphasise the social and economic costs India faced as a result of escalation or movements toward war, including the trade and investment costs of increased tensions and budgetary implications of mobilising forces.[210]

Authors citing this issue were principally leftist and pro-Congress commentators. The balance of support for policy options for articles highlighting this influence was a large majority in favour of Option 2, for peace talks, with a smaller group for the Option 1 isolate-and-pressure approach. With this particular political support base and its dominant support for the peace talks option, and its low ranking in the hierarchy of issues cited, the influence of this issue was thus a fairly minor aspect of this discourse.

[208] Editorial, "Ground Zero Hour", Times of India, May 31, 2002.

[209] K. Subrahmanyam, "Supine Superpower", Times of India, June 11, 2002; Subrahmanyam, "U.S. Presence in Arabian Sea Makes Indo-Pak N-Conflict Unlikely".

[210] Shishir Gupta and Hasan Zaidi, "Eyeball to Eyeball", India Today, April 15, 2002.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

The presentation of Chinese Pressures in the discourse evinced the same tendency as in the Kargil discourse: the India-Pakistan bilateral nature of the conflict relegating other state pressures lower down the hierarchy of influences. While the emphasis on this discourse on international engagement meant that the United States and states other than China enjoyed greater discussion in the discourse than in the Kargil episode, this trend did not extend to perceptions of China. Beijing and its preferences in this crisis were seen as a background issue, rather than an active interlocutor to be engaged as part of efforts to resolve the crisis.[211]

Articles citing Chinese Pressures were principally supportive of the peace talks option, although the Option 1 isolate-and-pressure and Option 3 conventional strikes approaches were both represented by one article each in this category. The average attitude score of -0.83 for authors citing Chinese Pressures, was slightly more pro-restraint than the average score for this episode, reflecting the dominant argument of the peace talks supporters of the dangers of taking risks in an unstable region of which a nuclear China was an important background element.

Issue: Disarmament Pressures

This issue was cited only by a small minority of articles in the discourse, all of whom were leftist anti-nuclear campaigners supporting the Option 2 peace talks approach. They cited this issue to emphasise the new dangers that nuclear weapons had brought to the subcontinent, and the need for their abolition as the only long-term route to regional peace.[212]

This argument was predictably bolstered by an average attitude score of -1, the most pro-restraint score possible. However, the influence of this issue in the discourse was still very minor – only a small group of articles supporting the second most popular policy option cited it as relevant to this crisis, reflecting again the extent to which frustration and desire for revenge against Pakistan was the dominant theme of this discourse.

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[211] Gupta, "Ready for War?".

[212] Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work", Frontline, June 21, 2002.

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

Bureaucratic Influences here attracted a similar low level of citation as in the Kargil discourse, with only one article noting the influence of the nuclear bureaucratic enclave as relevant to this crisis. Another similarity with the Kargil episode was its citation by a leftist critic of nuclearisation to highlight the political forces in India driving it down the wrong nuclear road.[213]

For this author, the defence bureaucratic enclave was part of the political constellation responsible for endangering India through development of nuclear weapons. Recognising the flaws in their assumptions were crucial for India to begin the hard but necessary task of launching new peace talks while dismantling its nuclear capabilities.

As the joint least cited issue in this discourse, the low salience of Bureaucratic Influences in the nuclear episodes so far, despite the obvious influence they must have within government, remains an intriguing aspect of this study. In the previous Kargil discourse, the visibility of nuclear arsenal agencies such as the Department of Atomic Energy and Defence Research and Development Organisation was reduced due to their absence from contributions to the public debate. Their public silence continued here, which may partly account for their low profile in the discourse.

However, a second tendency that emerged in this discourse that may also have ensured their low salience here is the increased confidence of many participants in the discourse of the ability of Indian nuclear forces to handle any contingency that emerged. Here, commentators felt that the nuclear force was already "complete" vis-à-vis Pakistan's conventional and nuclear capabilities, and that Indian conventional and nuclear defences could cope with any escalatory scenario.

The reduced sense of the nuclear force as a work in progress, and emerging view of it as a complete tool ready to be used, also accounts for the decreased relevance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements within this discourse. The sense of "readiness" surrounding perceptions of the nuclear force in this episode was another departure from the Kargil

[213] Praful Bidwai, "An Ominous Stand-off", Frontline, March 15, 2002.

episode.

Issue: CTBT/FMCT Pressures

Alongside Bureaucratic Influences, CTBT and FMCT Pressures were the joint least most cited influence in this discourse. Its sole citation, in a *Frontline* commentary by an anti-nuclear activist, was in the form of a lament about the poor outlook for global nuclear disarmament in the context of this latest India-Pakistan crisis and a US administration that took a dim view of the CTBT.[214]

This citation formed at most a side tangent to discussion on actual policy options for the 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis. As also shown by the absence of any citations for NPT membership pressures, these treaties and questions regarding India's global nuclear governance approaches were perceived in the discourse as having almost no relevance to the discussion on how India should respond to the horrific Parliament attacks.

5.9 Conclusions

The Kargil war, in its discourse and the policy selected to settle the conflict, had represented an exemplar of political and military restraint in the face of provocation in a nuclear environment. Despite the fact that Pakistan had attacked not just Indian forces, but also emerging Indian assumptions of peaceful dialogue and territorial conservatism as the likely outcomes of the new post-1998 India-Pakistan bilateral nuclear rivalry, these surprises did not give way to Indian calls for revenge, restoring deterrence, or even using its new nuclear weapons in the Kargil discourse. Instead, support for nuclear restraint had risen to ever higher levels in the Kargil discourse compared to previous policy episodes.

This background demonstrates the extent to which the ground shifted with this much more dramatic attack in the nation's capital upon the heart of Indian government. In debating possible responses to this strike, the norm of nuclear restraint did continue as a visible

[214] Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work".

organising value in the discourse, with an average attitude score of -0.769. No policy option developed in this discourse recommended that nuclear weapons be used as part of India's response. With a solidly pro-restraint attitude score, and a list of policy options that all focused upon diplomatic and conventional military measures to stabilise the situation, this episode appeared broadly similar to the tenor and following policies of the Kargil discourse.

However, beneath this surface, there were real differences in Indian thinking regarding policies toward Pakistan and toward the role of India's nuclear weapons. The polarisation index score for this discourse, of 0.62, represented a more polarised result as compared to the complete consensus in favour of pro-restraint arguments in the Kargil crisis. This particular score for this conflict highlighted that there was notably less support for restraint, and a new appetite for maximalist nuclear measures that had not been present in the Kargil episode.

This tendency was further demonstrated in the specific policy options developed in the discourse. While none recommended use of nuclear weapons, two of the three options represented overtly escalatory measures, which would deliberately move both India and Pakistan up the escalation ladder in a nuclear environment. The most popular policy option, which the eventual government policy resembled, was a multifaceted politico-military approach of diplomatically and economically isolating Pakistan. This would be combined with raising military pressure upon Islamabad, although without direct strikes. The third most popular option was to conduct direct strikes and launch conventional operations across the border.

Where commentators in the Kargil discourse were universally alarmed of the implications of any escalatory measures when nuclear rungs now existed on the escalation ladder, this caution was therefore now much more reduced. A frequent recurring theme in this discourse was of a new confidence in the ability of India's politicians and military to locate space on the escalation ladder for conventional strikes and still control escalation so it did not approach the nuclear threshold. This was a great contrast with the absolute restraint and focus on limited defensive measures that was the hallmark of the Kargil discourse and policy.

The government policy correlated with the most popular policy option, to isolate and contain Pakistan through political, military and economic measures, but refraining from direct strikes. This option also enjoyed the strongest centrist political support of the three in this discourse,

with supportive commentators mainly consisting of centrist newspaper editorials, retired military officials and defence analysts. This correlation continued the trend in our study thus far, of the government policy resembling the first or second most popular policy option with the strongest centrist base of support. The fact that this option, which advocated such an unambiguously escalatory approach, was the centrist choice demonstrated the rise in nuclear hawkishness compared to the Kargil debates.

There were also transitions in the hierarchy of influences on nuclear policy in this discourse. Given that this was primarily an India-Pakistan bilateral crisis, Pakistan continued its same position as most cited influence that it held in the Kargil discourse. The framing of Pakistan in this discourse highlighted the rising public frustration and desire to give it a bloody nose, with most articles either attempting to outline the escalatory measures India could take against Pakistan without risking a nuclear response, or merely verbalising the public anger against Pakistan for its sponsorship of the groups that conducted such a provocative strike upon the Indian Parliament. A lesser constituency, mainly those calling for peace talks, sought to calm the waters and argue that India could not choose its neighbours and that only peaceful dialogue would stabilise the region.

American Pressures rose to the second most cited influence here from joint sixth in the Kargil discourse. This reflected the much greater emphasis on the importance of Indian international outreach to more fully pressure Pakistan, and the central role of ensuring that Washington aligned with New Delhi instead of Islamabad in this process. However, one facet of this framing of the United States was a new confidence in the ability of Washington to stop a Pakistani nuclear response to any Indian strikes before one was launched. This assumption, shared by several Indian analysts, essentially freed India's hand from any restraint or even responsibility for escalatory consequences of its actions. This was another aspect of the growing appetite for hawkishness, and another line of argument that was completely absent in the Kargil discourse.

Domestic Partisan Politics continued in its same position as in the Kargil discourse, as third most cited influence. This issue was mainly cited by commentators supporting peace talks, who decried what they saw as a jingoistic government and Parliament that together threatened to take India close to war and away from the calm dialogue that alone held the promise of peace. This framing and the position of Domestic Partisan Politics in the hierarchy

of influences illuminated the persistence of pro-restraint arguments within the discourse, despite the new hawkish trends outlined above.

The fourth most cited influence, of Other State Pressures outside China, Pakistan and the United States, illustrated the increased importance attached to Indian international liaison in this discourse as opposed to the Kargil episode. Afghanistan, as the most cited state, was principally framed either to highlight the American forces stationed there who would ensure no Pakistani nuclear response to any Indian actions, and secondly as an example of the perceived global acceptability of anti-terrorist strikes following September 11 that India could take advantage of. The other states cited were mainly summoned to highlight the different world capitals India should seek to persuade to join its containment of Pakistan.

The influence of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in this crisis episode demonstrated notable departures from that in the previous Kargil crisis. There was a visible decline in concern that the nuclear forces of India and Pakistan meant that any Indian conventional escalation could lead to nuclear war, leading to lower citation levels for this issue as compared to those in the Kargil episode. While a majority of opinion still held the view that nuclear weapons rendered any Indian conventional strike too dangerous, this was no longer a universal opinion as in Kargil, and was now being contested by an alternate hawkish perception that room existed on the escalation ladder for India to strike and that its nuclear force would deter Pakistan from a commensurate response.

This was therefore a different crisis to that of Kargil, and one that generated a discourse more desirous of punishing Pakistan despite the risks of escalation in doing so. The government policy was far more provocative than in Kargil, including massing forces on the border, a sustained campaign of diplomatic outreach to isolate Pakistan, and generally raising tensions to the extent that Western embassies began evacuating their staffs at the peak of the crisis. The omnipresent support for defensive conventional caution and nuclear restraint that had characterised the Kargil discourse was now replaced by a more polarised debate, with a visible constituency for escalatory measures that had not existed previously. Thus while nuclear restraint still remained a prominent norm in characterising debates on Indian nuclear policy, its influence was substantially reduced here. The evolution of India's nuclear discourse and policy now featured a willingness to use escalatory force that had not existed previously, highlighting the extent to which this episode forms a landmark in our study.

Chapter 6: Decision: 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine

6.1 Introduction

The 1999 draft nuclear doctrine, as we analysed in a previous chapter, was developed in a specific context that now feels quite distant in the wake of the Kargil and Parliament bombing crises. In the immediate aftermath of the 1998 nuclear tests, the Indian government convened discussions among retired officials, defence scholars and analysts to formulate a draft nuclear doctrine. The headwinds facing the government at this time included strong pressures from Western states and other state leaders of the nonproliferation regime to cease testing, join the CTBT, and adopt formal restraint measures, which were complemented by similar domestic sentiments strongly in favour of nuclear restraint and demonstrating India's superior moral education in nuclear matters and following determination to avoid arms racing.

The document that was unveiled, forming India's first public nuclear doctrine, included several of these restraint measures. Under the doctrine, India would adopt a no-first-use policy against nuclear states, and refrain from using the bomb against non-nuclear weapons states not benefiting from extended deterrence; view the primary purpose of its nuclear force as to deter other nuclear forces, rather than a more expansive role; and structure its nuclear force development around a guiding principle of "credible minimum deterrence", suggestive of a generally minimalist approach.

While this doctrine thus met the domestic and international demand for a statement of India's nuclear restraint following the 1998 tests, the manner of its evolution and announcement raised questions. These revolved around its status as a "draft" doctrine, developed by a group of experts advising but still at a remove from the Prime Minister and military command chain. What status did such a document have? Was it an official statement of the principles that would henceforth characterise the nuclear force, or merely a list of aspirations that the government may or may not adopt? While at times the government seemed to distance itself from the document, it was still unveiled at a government event and introduced by no less than

the national security advisor.[215] This would suggest that its status was akin to an official working draft.

However, this led to new demands on the Indian government by both domestic analysts and other states for a final version.[216] If this was only a working draft, when would the final version be developed and announced? How valid were the principles of the doctrine for characterising policy if it was something less than an agreed final version? In the absence of an unambiguously official document clearly approved by the Prime Minister and military command chain, what value did this document ultimately hold?

Alongside this perceived need for a new doctrine based upon the uncertain status of the 1999 draft, a fresh iteration would meet other imperatives. A frequent lament among centrist newspaper editorials and defence experts in previous discourses was the poor parliamentary and mass public understanding of nuclear affairs. This, they argued, was due to the extreme secrecy applied to nuclear policy considerations by successive governments and refusal to share any details of current nuclear thinking with parliament or the public. Other nuclear states released regular defence white papers identifying the overall priorities their forces would protect and the role of nuclear weapons in safeguarding these. India's failure to do so did both its defence and public a disservice, by reducing the potential of educated non-official debates on nuclear policy and knowledge of the principles underpinning nuclear deterrence by the paucity of information that the government allowed to its citizenry.[217]

This plea for greater information and transparency was one of the principal driving arguments in favour of developing a first public doctrine in the 1999 discourse. Although the 1999 draft doctrine had been a start in this direction, analysts argued that there was still much to be done

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[215] Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. *Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine*, August 17, 1999, available at http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/Draft+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine

[216] R. Ramachandran, "Unclear Nuclear Identity", Frontline, September 10, 1999; P.R. Chari, "India's Nuclear Doctrine: Confused Ambitions", Nonproliferation Review Vol. 7 No. 3 (Fall/Winter 2000) pp. 123-135; Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, pp. 252-256.

[217] See, for example, Subrahmanyam, "Educate India in Nuclear Strategy"; Editorial, "Saffron Bombshell", Editorial, "Competitive Jingoism".

in terms of releasing information and encouraging public discussion. A new official doctrine would therefore help in this educative mission of government.

This perceived insufficiency of the draft 1999 doctrine in terms of official status and contribution to public education was joined by concerns about the changing world following the September 11 attacks. The audacity of these attacks raised fears about terrorists obtaining nuclear materials, and with it the thorny question of how state nuclear arsenals could deter stateless nuclear terrorists. A related concern was the potential for terrorist chemical and biological attacks. Given that international norms and arms control regimes had raised the political costs of states possessing such horrific weapons, how could a state deter against stateless groups who held no such inhibitions?

These global security shocks suggested that the Cold War assumption of weapons of mass destruction as tools developed and used only by states against other states was being replaced by a more fluid and unpredictable threat environment. The 2001 United States Nuclear Posture Review outlined the American response to these new conditions. It asserted a willingness to use nuclear weapons to deter or in response to biological or chemical attacks, including plans to build new *"flexible, adaptable strike plans"* toward potentially tactical use in local environments. The review also spoke of the US nuclear arsenal as relevant to *"surprising military developments"*, suggesting a readiness to use the bomb in conventional conflicts.[218]

This new thinking was undeniably hawkish, but it had least formed one answer to the question of how nuclear weapons fit into the uncertain global security environment immediately following the September 11 attacks. By comparison, the 1999 draft doctrine still imagined India's nuclear force as primarily directed against states. Was this still the case for India despite the risks of stateless groups obtaining nuclear materials? If Washington had felt a nuclear review was necessary to incorporate the changed international context following the September 11 attacks, what would India's response be? Was the 1999 doctrine still sufficient, or was an updated doctrine needed?

[218] United States Government. *Nuclear Posture Review Report (Excerpts)*, January 8, 2002, available at http://web.stanford.edu/class/polisci211z/2.6/NPR2001leaked.pdf

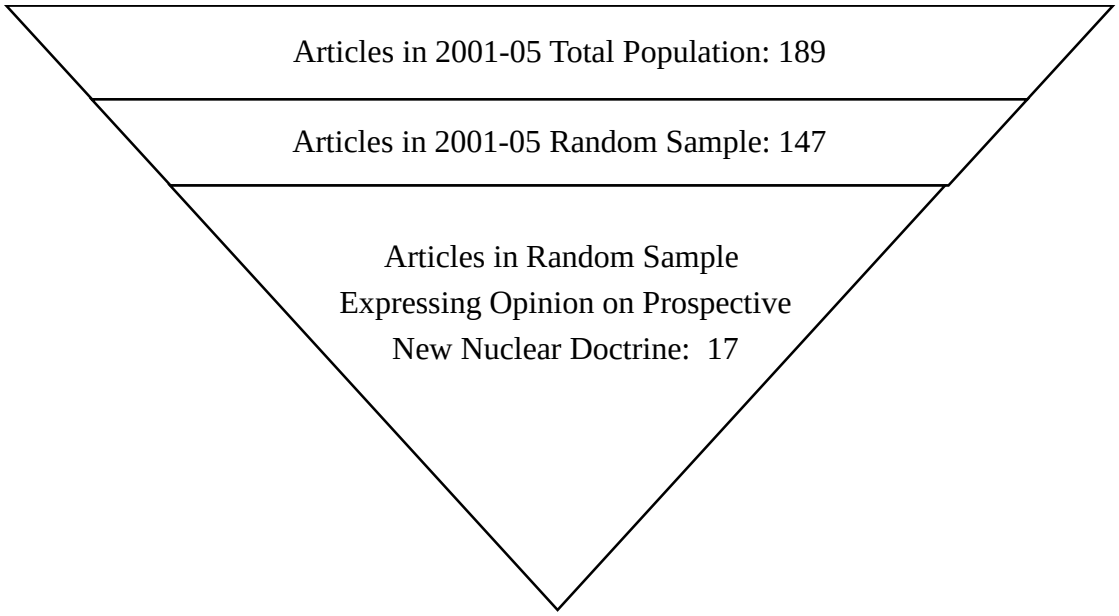
Regional military pressures joined these shifts in international perceptions of nuclear weapons. The Parliament attacks crisis had evidenced several instances in which Islamabad moved missiles or made references to its willingness to use the bomb. As shown in the previous chapter, the Indian discourse on the crisis also illuminated an increased Indian confidence in its nuclear and conventional capabilities and readiness to escalate the crisis to punish Pakistan. The chronology from the Kargil to the Parliament bombing crises suggested a growing Pakistani willingness to launch increasingly ambitious subconventional attacks on India, with the expectation that mutual nuclear deterrence prohibited a robust Indian response. How would India plan to deter or respond to the next such attack?

The regional threat environment, alongside global views of the role of nuclear weapons, therefore also appeared to be changing from the world that was anticipated in the 1999 draft doctrine. The Indian government therefore came under pressure to develop a new doctrine, based upon this uncertain official status of the 1999 version; the lack of government communication and transparency on its nuclear thinking; the international post-September 11 rethinking of the role of nuclear weapons; and the rising aggression of Pakistan following the 1998 nuclear tests.

6.2 Balance of Opinion in 2001-3 Nuclear Doctrine Strategic Discourse

Seventeen articles in the random sample expressed an opinion on a prospective new nuclear doctrine.

Figure 18: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Prospective New Nuclear Doctrine



Of these seventeen articles, fifteen supported developing a new doctrine and two opposed this, feeling that the 1999 version was sufficient and should be implemented. The tendency of doctrinal policy questions to attract more maximalist sentiments than questions focusing on actual use of the bomb continued, with this episode generating the most pro-maximalist attitude score yet, of **0.18**. There was also notable support in the policy options for removing the restraint measures in the 1999 doctrine and ramping up nuclear force development. As we will see below, the discourse largely concentrated upon the importance of a new doctrine as a mechanism to fully entrench the nuclear force within Indian defence planning and bolster adversary and public understanding of this fact.

6.3 Attitude Score

The attitude score for articles in this episode was **0.18**. With articles coded as '0' (those not containing an opinion in favour of a maximalist or pro-restraint nuclear force, but still expressing an opinion on general nuclear policy) removed from this calculation, leaving only those coded as '1' or '-1', for maximalist and pro-restraint views respectively, the attitude

score becomes **0.2**. This was the first episode in which the attitude score leaned toward the pro-maximalist side of the opinion spectrum, reflecting a tendency for increased hawkishness in doctrinal rather than militarised crisis policy dilemmas. The position of this score as the most maximalist yet of the doctrinal questions analysed so far also suggests a possible overall erosion of the restraint norm that characterised the discourses at the outset of our study. While this was visible in our comparative examinations of the Kargil and Parliament bombing discourses, which were both militarised crisis decisions, this attitude score could suggest that this trend was also discernable in the doctrinal episodes over the course of our study.

Table 19: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.18**

Table 20: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.66**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.8**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.2**

6.4 Polarisation of Debate

This discourse had a polarisation index of **0.95**, displacing the debate on establishing overt nuclear deterrence as the new most polarised discourse in our study. With articles coded as '0' removed, this polarisation index becomes **1.01**. There was a strong concentration of pro-maximal policy arguments in this particular episode, and a closer balancing of these with pro-restraint articles. The highly polarised nature of this discourse, featuring some commentators arguing for a new doctrine as a means to dismantle India's nuclear force while others supporting a new document in order to build a maximalist arsenal, is shown in the analysis of policy options below. A comparison of this polarisation index with previous indices is provided in Table 21 below.

Table 21: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.74**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.62**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.95**

Table 22: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

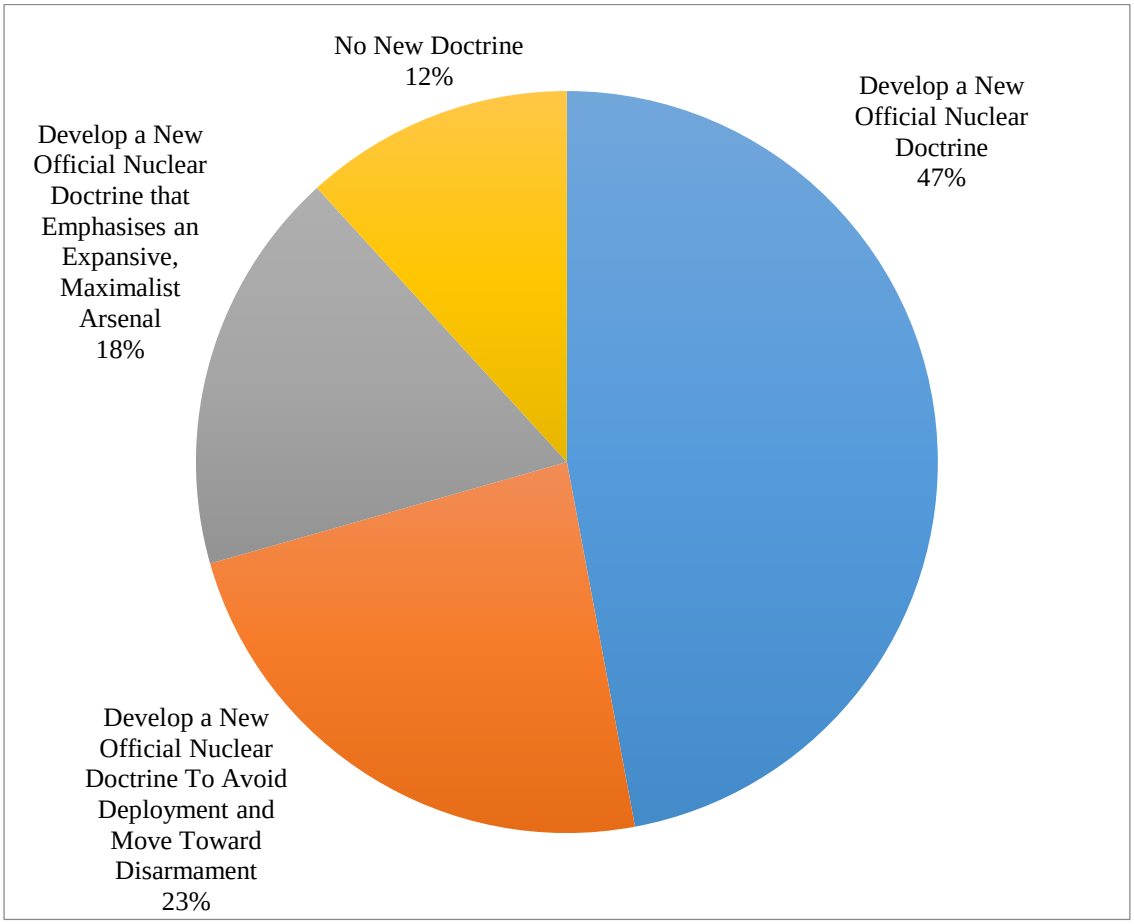
Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.76**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.61**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**1.01**

6.5 Policy Options Promoted in 2001-3 Nuclear Doctrine Discourse

The degree of polarisation of this discourse was shown by the specific options it recommended. The most popular option focused upon the need for the government to issue a new doctrine, with this process and result judged more important than the actual content that the document would carry. A new doctrine would demonstrate India's defence capabilities and determination to field a credible nuclear force. The other options were each irreconciliable with each other: one wanted a new doctrine to declare a new Indian policy of maximalist nuclear force expansion; one wanted a new document to announce new, further-reaching restraint measures as a step toward near-term disarmament; and one felt the 1999 draft was still sufficient for India's needs and that government attention should focus upon implementing it rather than developing new versions.

This was therefore a different situation than in the 1999 doctrine discourse, which featured several options that were very close to each other and were separated only by the specific combinations of pro-restraint policies they advocated. The policy options developed in this discourse presented a much more stark choice to policymakers, reflecting the greater polarisation and rising influence of maximalist policy arguments in this discourse.

Figure 19: Policy Options Promoted in 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine Discourse



Option 1: Develop a New Official Nuclear Doctrine (47%)

This discourse echoed that of the 1999 doctrine debate in their most popular policy options. In both of these doctrinal discourses, the most popular policy option merely argued that India issue a new nuclear doctrine, without concerning itself with detail about what this doctrine should actually contain. This option viewed a nuclear doctrine as primarily an instrumental mechanism to coordinate nuclear force development, advance parliamentary and public education of nuclear issues, and communicate resolve to India's adversaries. The actual doctrinal changes to be made, if there were any, were in this view ancillary to the thrust of this argument, which called for a doctrine for the purposes above.

An example of this prioritisation of the instrumental effects of a new doctrine is shown in a *Telegraph* editorial, which highlighted the importance of a document toward structuring

command and control operations and clarifying India's unambiguously official nuclear thinking:

> *"Finally, India must quickly put in place a coherent nuclear doctrine and an attendant command and control system. Although the national security advisory board submitted a draft nuclear doctrine last year, it is still not clear whether the government has adopted these recommendations."*[219]

The requirement of this article that a new doctrine only be "coherent", and its emphasis on the command and control and "official" nature of the document as the main demands on a new doctrine, reflects the emphasis of this policy option on the communication and command chain structuring functions of the doctrine rather than its potential to dramatically revise its operational role in Indian defence, such as in altering thresholds of use.

The perceived need for greater parliamentary and public knowledge of nuclear affairs, so as to cultivate Indian strategic thinking and educated debate on defence policy, was also a primary rationale for a new public doctrine. This would help address the paucity of publicly available information on India's defence capabilities and outlook, as bemoaned by a *Times of India* editorial:

> *"Till now no steps have been taken by the government to educate its own ministers and the political class on various aspects of the nuclear policy. Whether or not India is ready to face the military nuclear challenge, it is evident it is not ready to face the nuclear age information challenge."*[220]

Another version of this plea highlighted the consequences for officials, rather than parliament and the public, of continuing with only the draft nuclear doctrine of uncertain status as the sole guide to Indian nuclear planning. A clearer iteration of India's official nuclear thinking would not just improve the quality of public discourse on these issues, but the knowledge of India's policymakers on what the nuclear force was and was not for. Defence analyst K. Subrahmanyam made this point with reference to the recent Parliament attacks crisis:

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[219] Editorial, "Fire Power", Telegraph, January 22, 2001.

[220] Editorial, "Tower of Babble", Times of India, June 21, 2002.

"Therefore, APJ Abdul Kalam was not wrong when he said nuclear deterrence ensured there would be no large-scale war. His views are in consonance with India's draft nuclear doctrine which postulates effective credible nuclear deterrence for India and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail...If the government had come out with precise formulations of our national security strategy and policy, there would have been much greater circumspection in the use of language by our leaders."[221]

This contribution also again highlighted the core theme of this policy option of a new doctrine primarily needed to clarify rather than revise India's defence policy. This suggested a conservatism regarding the actual content of the 1999 doctrine, as the commentators supporting this option repeatedly found fault with the unclear nature of the official status of the 1999 doctrine and the day-to-day management of the nuclear command chain rather than the principles set out in the 1999 draft regarding the purpose of the Indian nuclear force and the situations in which it might be used.

We can also see in this option a recurring emphasis on ensuring a transparent and efficient nuclear command and control structure as an essential part of a new doctrine. The existing system was opaque to the public eye and perhaps even ad-hoc in how it operated. A new structure would aid India in fielding its nuclear force, and also signal it had truly arrived as a responsible nuclear weapons state. A retired admiral particularly highlighted the salience of these command-and-control concerns to the perceived need for a new nuclear doctrine:

"…the Atomic Energy Act 1962 (should) be replaced by some meaningful legislation specifying who the National Command Authority is, the line of succession and clearly demarcating the responsibilities of the competing bureaucracies in Delhi. The present legislation is a meaningless piece of socialist gobbledygook. Legislation must also specify the accountability for storing, custody, transportation and loss of nuclear material, both explosive and technical."[222]

[221] K. Subrahmanyam, "Courting Confusion", Times of India, June 24, 2002.

[222] K. Raja Menon, "Nuclear Deterrence: Hand Over Warheads to the Army", Times of India, May 28, 2002.

Articles supporting this policy option were principally centrist newspaper editorials and retired officers, alongside one article each by a defence analyst and Congress politician. This formed a largely centrist political support base. Combined with the position of this policy option as the most numerically popular in the discourse, this would lend strong support to its chances of being selected as official policy, based upon the pattern in previous episodes.

Option 2: Develop a New Official Nuclear Doctrine to Avoid Deployment and Move Toward Disarmament (23%)

These articles drew in the anti-nuclear and leftist elements of the political spectrum, to argue that India should revise its official nuclear thinking and launch a new policy of halting nuclear force development, rejecting the prospect of the bomb as a permanent fixture in India's defence toolbox, and undertaking measures to reduce nuclear force usability toward the ultimate goal of disarmament. This would represent a policy volte-face, but the emergence of new missiles as political and military reality threatened to forever close this window of opportunity for disarmament. An anti-nuclear scholar made this point:

> *"Even if the poorer economies of India and Pakistan do not allow for the reproduction of arsenals of the kind that a superpower has with tens of thousands of weapons, the same qualitative dynamics will obtain in South Asia as well. The introduction of the nuclear-capable Agni missile may well be the thin end of the wedge. The time to cut off these developments is now, before the services build up vested interests in maintaining deployed nuclear weapons arsenals and finding targets to justify greater numbers."*[223]

The overt purpose of these arguments to pave the way for Indian disarmament was made more clear by another anti-nuclear activist, who listed his desired changes to India's nuclear doctrine as wayposts toward disarmament as his explicit logical end-state:

> *"In the interim, it is vitally important that India and Pakistan immediately negotiate and implement nuclear risk-reduction measures (NRRMs), such as non-deployment,*

[223] M.V. Ramana, "A Nuclear Wedge", Frontline, December 21, 2001.

separation of warheads from delivery vehicles, advance exchange of information on each other's nuclear and missile activities, and nuclear safety technologies (for example, one-point safety for bombs). The basic purpose of NRRMs is not to legitimise nuclear weapons or make South Asia 'safe' for them, but to reduce the nuclear danger with a view to eliminating it altogether."[224]

A Pakistani anti-nuclear scientist, writing in *Frontline,* also sought a new doctrinal view as part of this gradual movement away from continued nuclear force development and deployment. His familiar framing emphasised the core argument of this policy option, which was ultimately a plea for disarmament as opposed to the other three options, which accepted the nuclear force as here to stay and considered how a new doctrine might improve its development. The barely-concealed disarmament imperatives of this policy option are highlighted in the following passage:

"I am definitely anti-nuclear, but I don't believe unilateral nuclear disarmament by Pakistan at this stage is either possible or desirable. Instead, we need a set of graduated steps by which both India and Pakistan first make their arsenals safer and less useable, and then rapidly move towards their reduction and elimination. The current trend of building more bombs and missiles must be reversed."[225]

As well as the call of this policy option for the same government which introduced the Indian nuclear bomb to now dismantle it, its formation from anti-nuclear, leftist critics of Indian nuclearisation and the general agenda of the BJP-led government made it extremely unlikely that this option would find favour among policymakers.

Option 3: Develop a New Official Nuclear Doctrine that Emphasises an Expansive, Maximalist Arsenal (18%)

The polarisation of this discourse and the irreconciliable nature of most of its policy options was particularly highlighted by the contrast between this and the previous policy option, at

[224] Praful Bidwai, "Nuclear Ostriches All", Frontline, July 5, 2002.

[225] Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work".

opposite ends of the opinion spectrum. Authors in this category sought a new doctrine for India that would remove the restraint measures of the 1999 draft and focus on building a large, diversified nuclear arsenal with a low threshold of use. This policy option envisioned a much greater role for nuclear weapons in Indian defence than the 1999 draft, and prioritised building the credibility and political and military usability of the force. A background concern driving these arguments, as a former Foreign Secretary argued, was the new nuclear hawkishness of the Bush administration as a perceived warning that India should not unilaterally entrap itself in restraint commitments:

> *"The logic behind two important policy decisions by the government of India becomes subject to doubts in the context of the likely revival of nuclear and missiles tests by the US. India, after its nuclear weapon tests in 1998, had announced that it will not hold any further tests and that there would be a moratorium on them. India had also given general indications that it will develop its missile and delivery systems subject to some self-imposed restraints. Should India remain committed to these goals given the prospects described above?"*[226]

This suggested the influence of revisions to American nuclear doctrine on this debate. A more extreme response to perceptions of increased American defence projection was supplied by a maximalist pro-BJP defence scholar, who listed Washington as one of the nuclear threats India needed a large nuclear force to explicitly deter against:

> *"To deal with the more immediate nuclear threat from China and to deter from the US coercively turning its military prowess against India on any pretext in the future demands the early acquisition of strategic armaments that the Indian government has shied away from, namely megaton-yield thermonuclear warheads and weapons married to intercontinental range ballistic and cruise missiles in sizable numbers."*[227]

A nuclear force of this extreme reach and destructive capability was far in excess of the allusions to minimalism and restraint in the 1999 nuclear doctrine. Indeed, in its *tous-*

[226] J.N. Dixit, "American Somersault", Telegraph, October 1, 2001.

[227] Bharat Karnad quoted in Amitabh Mattoo, "Ace Provocateur", India Today, June 24, 2002.

azimuths targeting philosophy and emphasis on maximum usability and destructive potential, this specific view represents a distillation of maximalist nuclear policy thinking. However, rendering this outlook the new official policy for India would undermine the hard-fought image of restraint developed through the 1999 draft doctrine and Kargil war, and thus represent about as much a volte-face as that of Option 2, for movement toward disarmament.

A less extreme, but still dramatic revision to India's nuclear policy was suggested by another hawkish, pro-BJP defence analyst. This took aim not at bolstering India's nuclear operational reach and potential payloads, but giving the nuclear force a greater role in Indian defence by lowering its threshold of use. The no-first-use policy had not posed a sufficient deterrent to Pakistan, this argument held, and loosening it to a "flexible no-first-use posture" that allowed nuclear pre-emption should be part of a new doctrine:

> *"The present Indian posture is nonflexible in that it commits India not to use nuclear weapons first in any situation. If Pakistan unsheathes its nuclear weapons, should India wait until an Indian target has been nuked before it responds? Or should India spell out in advance that its nuclear red-line would be crossed Pakistan begins loading a bomb on a warplane or mating a warhead with a missile? A flexible no-first-use posture will make clear that India would begin interdiction once an adversary unmistakeably mounts a nuclear weapon for delivery."*[228]

This policy option signified a far more visible constituency for nuclear maximalism in this debate than in the 1999 doctrine debate, highlighting the trend also seen in the military crisis decisions of the erosion of the organising value of restraint following the Kargil war. The commentators making these arguments, two pro-BJP scholars and a former Foreign Secretary, formed the political constituency most likely to be overall close to and supportive of the Indian government among those of the political options in this discourse. However, this constituency was notably weak in terms of centrist support, and its arguments only commanded 18% of the discourse here. Similar to the problem with Option 2, the dramatic shift in nuclear policy by the same government that this option would represent further undermined the likelihood of the eventual government policy resembling this policy option.

[228] Brahma Chellaney, "Need for Flexible No-First-Use", Hindustan Times, May 25, 2002.

Option 4: No New Doctrine (12%)

The two articles in this category held that the 1999 draft doctrine was sufficient to guide Indian nuclear force development, and that the government needed to focus its energies upon implementing nuclear force development based upon that doctrine rather than rewriting the doctrine. One comment, by a former Atomic Energy Commission head, highlighted the importance of now building a credible nuclear force and command structure, with the doctrine in his view already decided:

> *"Having unilaterally decided in favour of 'no-first-use', however, we should now go in for a second strike capability. In other words, we have to build a credible deterrent…from what one can infer, we are as yet only in the process of formulating a credible control and command structure."*[229]

This comment viewed questions of revising the nuclear doctrine as an unnecessary distraction that would waste time and political energy that should be devoted to building a credible nuclear force. However, another reason for avoiding reopening the 1999 doctrine was the looming influence of the new strategic thinking of the Bush administration as a possible alternative. The new emphasis of Washington on the values of pre-emption, as publicly lauded by former Indian Foreign Secretary Jaswant Singh, had circulated in the 2001 Parliament bombing discourse in the form of its limited conventional strikes policy option. The 1999 draft stood as a bulwark against this dangerous new outlook, as explained by a *Times of India* editorial:

> *"First, deterrence and self-defence cannot be used interchangeably, and India's nuclear doctrine recognises as such…As the world's only superpower, the US is arguably in a position to justify the use of unilateral force, indeed even elevate the first-strike option to the level of doctrinal philosophy. But surely it is not India's place to endorse that doctrine."*[230]

[229] M.R. Srinivasan, "Nuclear Bombast", Times of India, October 9, 2002.

[230] Editorial, "Preventive Terror", Times of India, October 3, 2002.

The concern that a new doctrine would reflect some of the new interventionist thinking emanating from Washington, as encapsulated in the prominent role assigned to the nuclear force in all aspects of American defence planning in the 2001 US Nuclear Posture Review, therefore animated this editorial's defence of the principles of no-first-use and nuclear restraint that formed the philosophy of the 1999 draft doctrine.

This was the least popular policy option, consisting of one contribution by a former Atomic Energy Commission head and one newspaper editorial. 88% of the discourse called for some form of new nuclear doctrine, forming a strong majority of the discourse in favour of a new iteration. This made it unlikely that the government would construct a policy resembling this policy option, as the only one opposing a new doctrine.

6.6 Summary

This discourse evidenced both the trend of erosion of the organising value of nuclear restraint seen in the military crisis chapters, and increasing dissensus regarding how India's nuclear force should secure India in the world following the September 11 and Parliament attacks. The attitude score for this discourse was 0.18, the first in our study to lean toward the maximalist end of the opinion spectrum. This result combines both the tendency in our study for discourses focusing on peacetime doctrinal rather than military crisis decisions to record more maximal attitude scores, and the underlying overall erosion of restraint commencing with the Parliament attacks crisis episode. There thus appeared in this episode to be continued evidence for underlying shifts in political and military perceptions of the bomb in Indian strategic culture.

However, while this appeared to be pointing the way toward a maximalist policy future, the discourse did not uniformly endorse this. A high degree of polarisation in the discourse was visible in the polarisation index of 0.95, very close to the point of 1 representing extreme polarisation. Indeed, the specific policy options highlighted growing dissensus about the best use for India's nuclear force in the uncertain world of the early years following the September 11 attacks. 88% of the discourse, including the vast majority of centrist political support, supported the development of a new nuclear doctrine in this discourse. On the surface, this appeared similar to the 1999 doctrine discourse, in which there had been

overwhelming support for a new doctrine with several nuclear restraint measures. However, the policy options here were more finely balanced and largely irreconcilable. While the erosion of restraint was a continuing visible trend in this discourse, the level of dissensus here did not illuminate what might replace it.

6.7 Selecting an Option

The stark divisions in this discourse were shown by two of the policy options being at opposite ends of the opinion spectrum from each other, with one option calling for a new doctrine to guide India toward disarmament, and one advocating a doctrine that would usher in a much larger and destructive nuclear arsenal. A third option called for no new doctrine and for policymakers to instead focus on the continued work of implementing the 1999 draft doctrine. It was difficult to imagine a navigable middle ground among these three options for policymakers.

The second most popular option was to revise India's nuclear doctrine in order to avoid operationalising the nuclear force and instead minimise its role in defence toward disarmament. The leftist, anti-nuclear political constituency that formed the fiercest critic of all aspects of the BJP-led government advocated this option. Given that this option was being voiced from this quarter, and it would represent a dramatic about-turn from the nuclear tests and announcement of overt arsenal development in 1998, it was extremely unlikely that this option would carry the day.

The third most popular option was almost a mirror-image of the previous one – to remove all possible political and military restraints upon Indian nuclear force development and build as large and destructive arsenal as India could afford to, while lowering the threshold of its use. This would greatly expand the role of the nuclear force in India's defence projection, and form a repudiation of the attestations of nuclear restraint in the 1999 doctrine and by the government in its diplomacy following the nuclear tests. While its political support base was the most clearly supportive of the general policy agenda of the government, the scale of change required rendered the chances of this policy option being selected as low.

The fourth option, with only 12% support in the discourse, was to avoid developing a new doctrine and focus upon full implementation of the 1999 draft nuclear doctrine. The two articles in this category felt the 1999 draft was fully sufficient as a guide for Indian nuclear force development, and one of these articles in particular felt its continuation as the doctrine would safeguard against the dangerous preventive, first-strike thinking coming out of Washington from finding a footing in any successor Indian nuclear doctrine. However, this option stood against a majority of 88% calling for a new doctrine, and thus had low chances of selection as policy.

The remaining option, to develop a nuclear doctrine, was the most popular and held the most centrist political support base. Given that these criteria had defined the successful policy option in past episodes, and that this option joined a majority of 88% of the discourse, it was highly likely that the eventual government policy would resemble this policy option based upon the previous pattern of correlation.

The main distinguishing characteristics of the new doctrine that was announced on January 4, 2003, indeed closely resembled the arguments made by Option 1. The main focal points of this argument were the need for the doctrine to be publicly available, have an unambiguous official imprimatur, and that it clarify the nuclear command-and-control structure. The actual other content of the doctrine and potential other revisions were not a concern in this policy option, where Options 2 and 3 recommended radical changes in this area toward disarmament or maximal nuclear projection.

The resultant 2003 doctrine outlined a clear command-and-control structure with clearly demarcated military and civilian roles, and asserted the position of this structure as the only means through which the civilian political leadership could authorise a nuclear strike. The document was also now unassailably the official policy of the government, produced by the Cabinet Committee on Security and released as an official government press release.[231] This met the main demands of Option 1.

[231] Government of India, Press Information Bureau. *Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews Progress in Operationalizing India's Nuclear Doctrine*, January 4, 2003, available at http://pib.nic.in/archieve/lreleng/lyr2003/rjan2003/04012003/r040120033.html

The document also did not make the kind of dramatic changes that would more closely reflect a primary influence from Option 2 or Option 3. The guiding principle, as the document attested, was still "credible minimum deterrence"; it recommitted India to a testing moratorium and to seek a nuclear-free world; and that it would not use nuclear weapons against states which did not possess them. This appeared to continue the core thinking of the 1999 nuclear doctrine, and preserve its theme of nuclear restraint.

However, in certain sections, some maximalist policy thinking crept in. While the doctrine affirmed India's policy of no-first-use, there were more caveats now on the no-first-use policy than previously. The no-first-use policy would now be null and void in the event of a nuclear, chemical or biological attack on Indian territory or *"Indian forces anywhere"*. This was a loosening of the conditions in the 1999 doctrine, which had preserved a nuclear response only for a nuclear strike on Indian territory or forces. The 2003 iteration now also permitted a nuclear response to a biological or chemical attack, and clearly specified that Indian forces in the field were also covered by this backstop. This broadened the range of scenarios in which Indian nuclear weapons might be launched, representing a slight lowering of the threshold of use.[232]

Another new condition for the no-first-use policy was a statement that should India be compelled to retaliate to a strike with nuclear weapons, this retaliation would be *"massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage"*.[233] The 1999 doctrine had merely committed India to *"punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor"*.[234] This new iteration suggested a more aggressive response.

The new doctrine thus principally resembled the arguments of Option 1. However, the loosening of the no-first-use commitment in broadening the scenarios in which the Indian nuclear force could be used also suggested an influence by the maximalist Option 3 arguments, which had called for a more "flexible" no-first-use doctrine. The new mention of massive retaliation was the only change not specifically previously mentioned in this discourse, but formed another reflection of the overall erosion of nuclear restraint and

[232] Ibid.

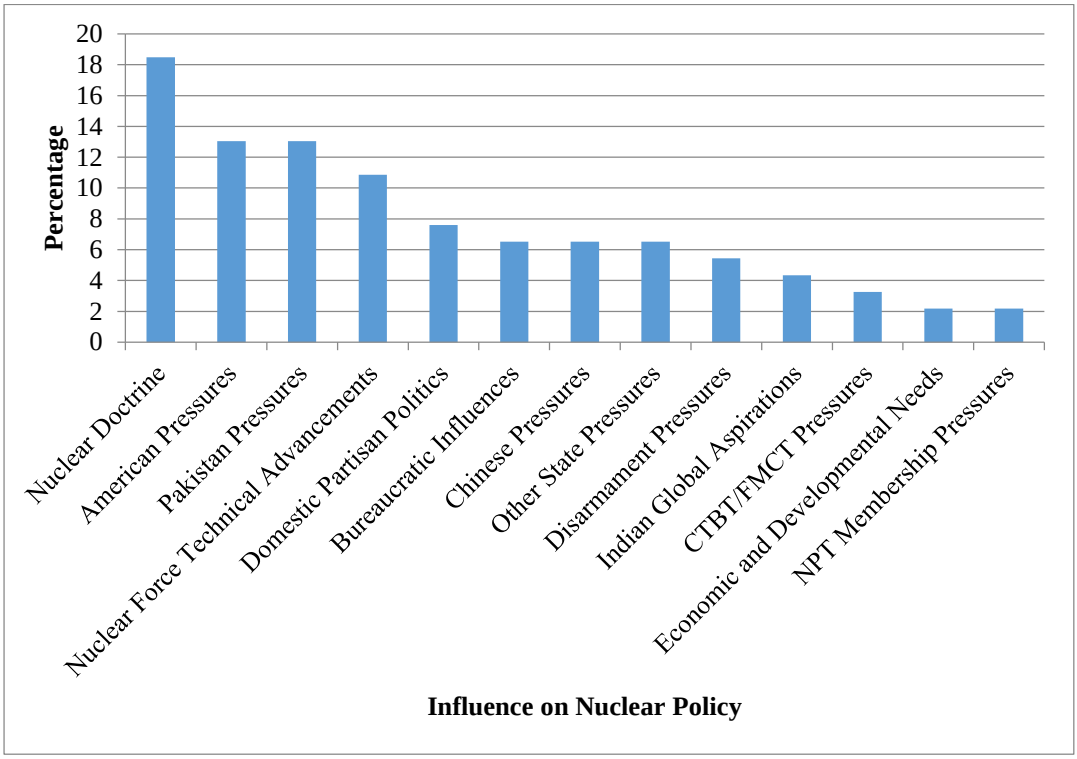
[233] Ibid.

[234] Government of India, *Indian Nuclear Doctrine*.

appetite for greater nuclear hawkishness that we have seen since the Parliament bombing crisis.

6.8 Issues Cited in Discourse on 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine Decision

Figure 20: Issues Cited in Discourse on 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine Decision



The top four influences in this discourse – Nuclear Doctrine, Pakistan Pressures, American Pressures, and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements – accurately reflected the four main themes of this episode. These revolved around the qualities and disputed adequacy of the 1999 doctrine for India's nuclear policy; the recent military activities of Pakistan and the ability of India's current nuclear doctrine to deter it; the changes in American nuclear strategy and the relevance of these for Indian nuclear thought; and the capabilities and management of the Indian nuclear arsenal and whether a revised doctrine might improve these.

The hierarchy of these influences were similar to the 1999 doctrinal debate, with slight differences – the experience of Kargil and the Parliament attacks crisis, including veiled Pakistani nuclear threats in the latter, elevated Pakistan from joint third most cited influence in the 1999 discourse to joint second here. The relative quietude of China compared to the

several crises provoked by Pakistan since 1998 led to its demotion from joint third in the 1999 discourse to joint fifth most cited influence here.

Table 23: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Prospective New Nuclear Doctrine

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
NPT Membership Pressures	1
Chinese Pressures	0.67
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	0.4
Bureaucratic Influences	0.33
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	0.33
Indian Global Aspirations	0.25
Nuclear Doctrine	0.18
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Prospective New Nuclear Doctrine	*0.18*
Other State Pressures	0.17
Pakistani Pressures	0.08
Economic and Developmental Needs	0
Disarmament Pressures	-0.2
American Pressures	-0.08
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.43

The exclusion of articles coded as ‘0’ has barely visible effects on these attitude scores, with slightly more scores moving in a pro-maximal than in a pro-restraint direction, as shown in the table below.

Table 24: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Prospective New Nuclear Doctrine, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
NPT Membership Pressures	1
Chinese Pressures	0.66
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	0.4
Bureaucratic Influences	0.33
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	0.33
Indian Global Aspirations	0.33
Other State Pressures	0.2
Nuclear Doctrine	0.2
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Prospective New Nuclear Doctrine	*0.2*
Pakistani Pressures	0.09
Economic and Developmental Needs	0
American Pressures	-0.09
Disarmament Pressures	-0.2
Domestic Partisan Politics	-0.6

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

All articles in this episode cited Nuclear Doctrine as an influence. The framing of nuclear doctrinal issues came in two main forms. One form, as represented by the most popular policy option, focused upon the instrumental benefits of a new doctrine in improving management of the nuclear force and educating the public and parliament on nuclear issues.

This framing downplayed the importance of reviewing principles of the doctrine such as no-first-use or credible minimum deterrence. [235]

The other three policy options focused in more detail on the principles of the 1999 doctrine and whether these were suitable for the security challenges India was now facing. Just as the first framing had sought a new nuclear doctrine to also address non-nuclear defence management issues, the second framing was visibly influenced by dissatisfaction with India's general security condition, of which its nuclear deterrence was one element. The solution, depending on the preferred policy option of these authors, was either a new doctrine emphasising maximalism or one for disarmament.[236]

The tendency among these articles to expect greater gains for India's defence policy management from a new nuclear doctrine suggested a general frustration with India's security condition. This growing frustration, prominently displayed in the Parliament attacks crisis discourse, was also reflected in the strikingly irreconcilable dissensus of the policy options and the high degree of polarisation in the polarisation index for this discourse.

Issue: American Pressures

The perception of the relevance of the United States to this debate was principally as a stimulus to new Indian nuclear thinking. The main framing of this influence examined the military and nuclear assertiveness of the new Bush adminstration and portrayed this as a threat to India, albeit in different ways depending on the policy option the article supported. For supporters of an expansive, maximalist arsenal, India needed to consider emulating the new American nuclear outlook to avoid trapping itself in continued self-restraint in a dangerous world. [237]

However, among authors supporting a new doctrine that moved India closer to disarmament, the new American nuclear thinking demonstrated the inherent danger of nuclear weapons and

[235] Brijesh D. Jayal, "This is Not Submissiveness", Telegraph, May 29, 2001.

[236] Chellaney, "Need for Flexible No-First-Use"; Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work".

[237] Dixit, "American Somersault".

compelled the Indian government to firmly oppose this American trend toward giving nuclear weapons a greater role in defence planning. The current American trajectory, if emulated, would lead India down a dangerous path. [238]

Commentators advocating the most popular policy option, for India to develop a new doctrine that did not include a radical change in direction, saw these shifts in American strategic planning in a more benign light. These authors merely called upon India to review its nuclear policy just as the United States had. [239]

The influence of American strategic planning therefore overshadowed this debate, also shown by that fact that articles citing American Pressures were finely balanced among each of the policy options. The average score of -0.08, the second most pro-restraint score for influences in this discourse, reflects the inclusion of this issue among all anti-nuclear and leftist arguments but not all pro-maximal arguments.

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Given Pakistan's role in provoking the Kargil and Parliament bombing crises, and issuing veiled nuclear threats during the latter conflict, it was likely that it would be one of the strongest influences in the discourse on developing a new nuclear doctrine. The problems that an irresponsible, provocative Pakistan posed for Indian conventional and nuclear defences formed the main framing of this issue in this discourse. Arguments citing this issue then suggested departures from the 1999 doctrine in terms of how these would address this Pakistan problem. For proponents of a new doctrine without major revision and a doctrine that would emphasise a maximalist arsenal, restoring deterrence against a provocative Pakistan was a key objective of this process.[240]

Among those arguing for a new doctrine to usher in disarmament, the nuclear weapons of India and Pakistan were framed as the primary problem, rather than Pakistan's irresponsible

[238] Bidwai, "An Ominous Stand-off".

[239] Jayal, "This is Not Submissiveness".

[240] Raja Menon, "Nuclear Deterrence: Hand Over Warheads to the Army".

activities. Ridding South Asia of the bomb should instead be the first objective for the government.[241] The sole article citing Pakistan that opposed developing a new doctrine felt that Pakistan posed a thorny security problem for India, but that revising Indian nuclear doctrine to reflect the new trends in American strategic planning would not solve it.[242]

Articles citing Pakistan Pressures largely reflected the overall balance of support for each policy option in the discourse. The attitude score for these articles of 0.08 was pro-maximal, albeit still less than the average discourse attitude score of 0.18. The tendency of most pro-restraint arguments to cite Pakistan accounts for this difference.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

This influence returned to prominence in this discourse, after being relegated to comparatively lower levels of citation in the previous Kargil and Parliament attacks episodes. In the Kargil episode, the overwhelming preference for nuclear restraint led to the current state of the nuclear force being perceived as almost entirely irrelevant to the question of how to settle the conflict. In the Parliament attacks crisis, this issue was infrequently cited due to an opposite reason: many analysts had confidence that the nuclear force was ready to handle any contingency should it be needed.

Indeed, this issue not only returned to prominence as one of the top four most cited issues, but furthermore demonstrated a real rethinking of the meaning of India's nuclear force as compared to the first doctrinal debate in 1999. In the 1999 doctrinal discourse, the framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements had been primarily in the form of emphasising the need for declaratory restraint measures to guide nuclear force development. The attitude score for articles citing Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in this discourse had been -0.68, firmly in the pro-restraint column.

In this 2003 doctrine discourse, this issue was instead now primarily cited to doubt whether the 1999 doctrine was sufficient for building a credible nuclear force and general Indian

[241] Ramana, "A Nuclear Wedge".

[242] Srinivasan, "Nuclear Bombast".

security, and to urge the development of a new nuclear doctrine that would ensure dedicated nuclear force development, with much less attention paid to the importance of restraint measures.[243] This new framing was visibly more pro-maximalist as opposed to pro-restraint, underlined by the attitude score of 0.4 for articles citing this issue in this discourse, firmly in the pro-maximalist column.

There were still articles citing this issue that called for a new doctrine to drive India away from nuclear force deployment and toward disarmament, in the belief the emergence of an overt Indian nuclear arsenal would only endanger it and the region.[244] However, the primary framing of this issue was in the form of the pro-maximalist shift outlined above. The differences between the framing of this issue in the 1999 and 2003 doctrinal debates demonstrated the overall shift toward pro-maximalist thinking underway in the discourse, and the principal role of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as an influence in the discourse driving this shift.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

As the fourth most cited influence on nuclear policy, the role of Domestic Partisan Politics in shaping India's nuclear future was clearly accorded high salience among participants in this discourse. The two principal framings of this issue here evidenced dissatisfaction with the quality and direction of currents within Domestic Partisan Politics in regard to nuclear policy. The most common framing, by commentators favouring the most popular policy option for a new doctrine without radical changes, bemoaned the absence of rigorous thinking among parliament and the public on nuclear policy and the paucity of defence information that was released to the public. A new doctrine, these analysts attested, would alleviate these issues.[245]

The second framing was by supporters of the policy option calling for a disarmament-oriented nuclear doctrine. These analysts similarly found fault with the calibre of domestic political discourse, but rooted the problem in rising jingoism that threatened India and the

[243] Dixit, "American Somersault".

[244] Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work".

[245] Editorial, "Tower of Babble".

region. It was incumbent upon political and social groups within both India and Pakistan to realise the danger of this trend and raise their voices against nuclear force development, before such jingoism threatened nuclear war.[246]

This issue was cited only by articles supporting a new nuclear doctrine with no radical changes, and by those advocating a disarmament-oriented doctrine. Authors calling for a maximalist doctrine framed their argument largely in terms of external threats rather than Domestic Partisan Politics, while those supporting no new doctrine focused on the dangerous new American nuclear thinking and the state of current nuclear force development. This particular constellation of articles citing this issue thus accounted for its attitude score of -0.43, the most pro-restraint of issues in this episode.

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

This issue was joint fifth most cited in the discourse, its highest salience yet in our study. The fact that the nuclear bureaucratic complex undeniably has a role in nuclear policy, but has nevertheless consistently been one of the least cited influences in each episode, has been one of the puzzles of our study. The form of its citation here offers potential answers for its greater presence in this episode, and for why it had such a small previous role in the discourse.

This influence had a higher visibility in this discourse alongside a much greater focus on the detailed questions of operational management of an evolving nuclear force. This concern tends to come up in abstract doctrinal debates such as this episode and that of the 1999 doctrine, but not as much in crisis situations where such nuance is largely absent. The fact that this was a peacetime doctrinal debate would therefore suggest more of a focus on detailed nuclear planning within which the nuclear bureaucratic agencies play a central role. A second reason is the growth of the nuclear force from 1998, and a new sense in this episode that the force was evolving to an extent where different routes for its construction and maintenance were becoming available. This, too, would affect the nuclear bureaucratic complex, and thus drew its relevance as an issue into the debate.

[246] Ramana, "A Nuclear Wedge".

The main framing of this issue in the discourse was to recognise the role of the bureaucratic agencies in shaping the nuclear force, and discuss how a new doctrine could best utilise these institutions. However, the greater prominence assigned to bureaucratic issues in this discourse due to their operational relevance was also reflected by anti-nuclear commentators calling for a disarmament-focused doctrine. For example, an anti-nuclear activist highlighted the activities of the nuclear bureaucratic complex in developing new nuclear force delivery vehicles as part of his view of a dangerous trend toward threatening nuclear war.[247]

A third reason for the higher salience of bureaucratic issues in this episode was the greater direct participation of its members in the discourse. While there was only one contribution by a former Atomic Energy Commission chief in this discourse, this was still more than in previous episodes.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

As the joint fifth most cited influence, Chinese Pressures had less salience to this discourse than previously. The Kargil and Parliament bombing conflicts with Pakistan, as well as its veiled nuclear threats, had ensured the position of Pakistan in the top four most cited influences. The recent revision of American nuclear doctrine, and the disputed wisdom of emulating its new aggressive nuclear posture for India's needs, moved American Pressures into a similar top ranking. By comparison, China's near-total absence from the Kargil and Parliament bombing crises, as well as its doctrinal conservatism, led to its lesser salience in this episode.

However, these articles citing China had an attitude score of 0.67, the second most pro-maximal of all influences in this discourse. Despite Pakistan overshadowing China since 1998 as India's primary conventional and nuclear threat, the dominant portrayal of China here was as the ultimate target against which Indian nuclear doctrine must ensure a credible deterrent.[248] The second, less common framing was by an anti-nuclear commentator, who

[247] Bidwai, "An Ominous Stand-off".

[248] Editorial, "Fire Power".

portrayed the Chinese threat as a useful device for deploying in Indian domestic politics in order to create a permissive environment for nuclear force development.[249]

This issue was cited by analysts supporting all four policy options in this discourse, and was most popular among advocates of a new doctrine that did not make radical changes, and a new doctrine tailored toward a maximal, expansive arsenal. This shows China's continuing importance within general Indian nuclear discourse. Despite its absence from the recent military crises, its role as a major military threat for India had not been forgotten, and returned to the discourse as analysts began considering a new nuclear doctrine.

Issue: Other State Pressures

States outside the major three in India's nuclear debate – China, Pakistan and the United States – were joint fifth most cited in this discourse. However, the dominance of the aforementioned three states as adversaries or influences on India's strategic future overshadowed the role of other states in the question of a new nuclear doctrine. Over ten other states had been cited in previous episodes, most recently the Parliament attacks crisis. However, only six states were cited here. Russia received five mentions, Britain received two; and Iran, Iraq, Japan and North Korea each received one.

Russia and Britain were primarily cited in terms of imagining their likely responses to the American decisions to assign its nuclear force a greater role in defence planning and advance ballistic missile defence projects. Analysts largely expected these states to follow suit, creating a trend of global nuclear force expansion. These trajectories were to be resisted for those authors supporting a disarmament-focused doctrine, but form a background influence for a new doctrine for authors supporting a new doctrine without radical changes, or for a new maximalist doctrine. The balance of support for policy options in this issue area slightly preferred a new doctrine without radical changes, followed by a disarmament-focused doctrine, with one citation in favour of a new maximalist doctrine.

The other four states mentioned were largely cast in supporting roles for this scenario of the

[249] Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work".

global nuclear future. American nuclear hawkishness might drive Japan to develop nuclear weapons, while the juxtaposition of the new American nuclear thinking with its view of the other three states as an "Axis of Evil" suggested a new global conflict. Depending upon the author's preferred policy option, this either constituted a new world that a new Indian nuclear doctrine must grapple with, or further proof that nuclear weapons could only endanger the world.[250] The average attitude score of 0.17 for articles citing these issues, slightly less pro-maximal than the overall attitude score, highlighted the reliance of most pro-maximal arguments upon detailing the activities of China, Pakistan and the United States to make their case.

Issue: Disarmament Pressures

This was the sixth most cited issue, highlighting that a prominent section of the discourse continued to advocate measures toward Indian disarmament. Supporters of a new doctrine that severely restricted the political and military roles of the Indian bomb and deliberately moved India closer to disarmament mainly cited this issue.[251]

However, this issue was also cited by one article supporting a maximal doctrine and one supporting no new doctrine. Both warned of the dangers of taking India's stated support for disarmament too seriously in developing a nuclear force, and that this commitment should not prohibit India from taking the necessary nuclear measures to secure itself.[252]

The dominant citation of this issue by authors supporting a disarmament-focused doctrine, and the view by pro-maximal authors of this aspect as an irrelevance to India's nuclear future, ensured an average attitude score of -0.2, the third most pro-restraint in this episode.

[250] Dixit, "American Somersault"; Bidwai, "Nuclear Ostriches All".

[251] Bidwai, "Nuclear Ostriches All".

[252] Srinivasan, "Nuclear Bombast".

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

This issue had often been cited in previous episodes to support pro-restraint arguments. India's desired global image as a restrained, responsible superpower, these arguments went, compelled it to adopt nuclear restraint measures and refrain from dangerous escalatory movements in military crises. The overall balance of opinion in favour of pro-maximal arguments in this discourse was reflected in the presentation of this issue, which now primarily focused upon the requirement for India to develop a credible nuclear arsenal to be taken seriously by the world as a global player. Continuing with the restraint measures of the 1999 doctrine could entail India losing ground to other superpowers in their general military capabilities.[253]

However, this issue was also cited once by a pro-disarmament author to highlight the need for India to lead the world in dismantling nuclear capabilities, and once by a *Times of India* editorial supporting the policy option of a new doctrine without radical changes.[254]

This issue was thus largely reframed to now emphasise the costs to India's global image of failing to develop a coherent nuclear doctrine and credible nuclear force. This further highlighted the growing appetite for maximal sentiments in the discourse beginning with the Parliament attacks crisis.

Issue: CTBT/FMCT Pressures

This issue achieved a rare universal agreement across the discourse on its specific meaning for this policy question. Three articles cited this issue, one each supporting a new doctrine without radical changes; a maximalist doctrine; and a disarmament-focused doctrine. Despite the differences in their desired outcome, they all agreed that the CTBT and FMCT both had dim prospects under the American Bush administration, and this emerging background reality

[253] Dixit, "American Somersault".

[254] Editorial, "Tower of Babble"; Bidwai, "An Ominous Stand-off".

reflected a new era for Indian security.[255] While each article had its own ultimate recommendations, they all agreed that Indian nuclear policy would not need to engage with the CTBT or FMCT in the near future.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

Similar to the CTBT/FMCT issue, the topic of Economic and Developmental Needs also achieved a rare consensus regarding its meaning for this specific debate. Of the two articles citing this issue, one preferred a disarmament-focused doctrine and one desired a new doctrine without radical changes. However, both articles highlighted the danger of wasting economic resources on nuclear projects commissioned and designed without a strategic review to set political objectives and more efficiently allocate military resources to support these. The pro-disarmament article worried about inter-service rivalry leading to waste of economic resources as each service sought its own separate nuclear assets, while the other article bemoaned the Indian purchase of nuclear-capable Sukhoi Su-30 planes from Russia without any clear supportive strategic rationale.[256]

Again, while these two articles had different overall recommendations, they agreed on the economic waste that would occur through commissioning defence projects without being informed by prior strategic planning. Both supported a new doctrine in general terms to give this direction to Indian nuclear policy.

Issue: NPT Membership Pressures

Both articles that cited this issue held a view similar to that regarding the CTBT and FMCT: that the treaty appeared to be in deep difficulties under the Bush administration, that this highlighted the extent to which a new era in global security appeared to be commencing, and that Indian nuclear policy would not need to engage with the NPT issue in the near future.

[255] Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work"; Dixit, "American Somersault"; Jayal, "This is Not Submissiveness".

[256] Brijesh D. Jayal, "The Sukhoi Controversy", Telegraph, January 16, 2001; Ramana, "A Nuclear Wedge".

Nuclear weapons appeared be as permanent a fixture of global politics as ever, and Indian defence planning should incorporate this reality.[257] This realisation – that India appeared to be entering a post-NPT world – led to an attitude score of 1 for articles citing this issue, the most pro-maximal score possible.

6.9 Conclusions

The 2001-3 doctrine debate formed an important nuclear juncture for India. Since the nuclear tests of 1998 and the formulation of a draft nuclear doctrine in 1999, India had faced several security crises and policy dilemmas that had not been anticipated at the outset of our study. Widespread expectations that introducing mutual nuclear deterrence to the India-Pakistan rivalry would prove conducive to peace efforts, as both states would now realise the risks of any military provocation, had proven unfounded in the wake of the Kargil and Parliament bombing crises. The latter episode in particular highlighted a notable weakening of support for continued pro-restraint policies in the discourse, and a new appetite for escalatory measures to punish Pakistan regardless of the nuclear risks inherent in this pathway.

The 1999 draft had committed India to several voluntary restraint measures, such as a no-first-use policy and a nuclear force guided by a principle of "credible minimum deterrence". This reflected a strong support for pro-restraint policies in the discourse surrounding this policy decision. However, there was a visible erosion of support for pro-restraint policies in the Parliament bombing discourse and now again here. The strong majorities in favour of pro-restraint policies at the outset of our study were now being replaced by a more contested debate, balanced between pro-restraint and pro-maximal arguments. This was particularly highlighted by the polarisation index of 0.95, very close to the point of 1 representing extreme polarisation.

Combined with rising frustrations at the evident failure of the Indian nuclear force under the 1999 doctrine to deter Pakistan from provocations such as Kargil, a new nuclear doctrine was felt necessary by 88% of participants in this discourse to clarify India's nuclear position. The shock of the volte-face in American nuclear planning toward a more aggressive,

[257] Jayal, "This is Not Submissiveness".

interventionist posture in its 2001 nuclear posture review was also repeatedly cited in this discourse as another reason for India to urgently review and revise its nuclear doctrine.

The above shifts in Indian nuclear discourse, and the erosion of the once-dominant organising value of nuclear restraint, were perhaps best summarised by this discourse recording an overall pro-maximal attitude score, of 0.18. This was the first pro-maximal score in our study so far, highlighting the depth of frustration within the discourse at India's security predicament and desire for measures to reassert Indian nuclear deterrence even at the cost of some of its previous restraint commitments.

This desire for restoring deterrence underlay three of the four policy options developed in this discourse. One option called for a new nuclear doctrine mainly as a means to improve parliamentary and public education on nuclear issues and ensure a transparent, credible command and control structure; another supported a new doctrine that would end India's restraint commitments and build a large, maximalist arsenal; and one called for rededicated energy to building India's nuclear force, but felt this could be achieved without issuing a new doctrine. They largely agreed on the insufficiency of the 1999 doctrine, and its uncertain "draft" status as a realistic guide to shaping India's nuclear force, for building and managing a credible nuclear force. Only one option, representing just 23% of the discourse, felt that the above security challenges had proven the ineffectiveness of a nuclear programme for Indian defence, and called for a new doctrine that would entrench far more restrictive restraint measures with the ultimate aim of near-term disarmament.

The government decision correlated with the most popular policy option, for a new public nuclear doctrine that clarified India's command and control structure but did not make radical changes to the 1999 draft. This option had enjoyed the strongest centrist support of all in this discourse, highlighting again the tendency of successful policy options to be the first or second most numerically popular in the discourse and also possess a robust centrist base of support. The new doctrine, issued in January 2003, retained the no-first-use policy and guiding principle of credible minimum deterrence, while outlining a command-and-control structure that assigned clear roles to the civilian leadership and military users. Strategic discourse evidently continued to have an input in the policymaking process, as demonstrated by the most popular policy option as developed by the strategic discourse correlating with the ultimate government policy.

However, while the new doctrine closely resembled the recommendations of this most popular policy option, some elements of the new document suggested an additional influence by the policy option for a maximalist, expansive arsenal. For example, the new doctrine included more caveats on the no-first-use policy, now permitting a nuclear response to a biological or chemical attack. By increasing the range of scenarios in which Indian nuclear weapons might be used, this change represented a slight lowering of the threshold of use. This had been supported by arguments in the maximalist policy option, which at the least called for a more "flexible" no-first-use policy. Nevertheless, the majority of the new document still closely resembled the recommendations of the most popular policy option, which had called for a new doctrine that: had an unmistakably official status; was in the public domain; clarified the command-and-control chain; and did not make dramatic changes elsewhere.

The top four influences in this discourse – Nuclear Doctrine, Pakistan Pressures, American Pressures, and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements – encapsulated the four main themes of this episode. These revolved around the sufficiency of the 1999 doctrine for India's nuclear policy; the irresponsible provocations of Pakistan and the ability of India's current nuclear doctrine to restore deterrence against it; the transitions in American nuclear strategy and the consequences of these for India's nuclear planning; and the progress and management of the Indian nuclear force and whether a revised doctrine might enhance these.
Of these top four most cited influences in this discourse, two were external and one (Nuclear Force Technical Advancements) been primarily cited in previous episodes by pro-maximalist arguments. This reflects the overall pro-maximalist attitude score of this discourse, and again underlines the continuing erosion of support for nuclear restraint following the Kargil episode.

The dominant framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in the 2003 episode was: to assess the technical progress of Indian nuclear force development; sceptically question whether the 1999 doctrine and the nuclear policies associated with it had actually secured India and encouraged the emergence of credible nuclear assets; and call for a new nuclear doctrine that would ramp up nuclear force development, with the importance of restraint measures in this doctrine much less of a concern. This perceptual approach was visibly more receptive to maximalist as opposed to pro-restraint nuclear thought. This point was amplified by the pro-maximalist attitude score of 0.4 for articles citing Nuclear Force Technical

Advancements. As one of the top four most cited influences in this discourse, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements had therefore demonstrated a prominent influence in the discourse and in the shape of supporting pro-maximalist arguments.

While the policy eventually selected by government still retained the main restraint measures of the 1999 draft, the issuance of a new doctrine in itself had been supported in the discourse due to a widespread perception that Indian security demanded a revision and reassertion of its nuclear policy. Only 23% of the discourse preferred a new doctrine that reduced the role of nuclear weapons, highlighting that the remaining majority of participants advocated a new doctrine to fully entrench the nuclear force into Indian defence planning and to ensure that such a force could credibly defend India. This focus on operationalising and readying the nuclear force, combined with the pro-maximalist attitude score for this discourse, highlighted the growing prominence of maximalist arguments in Indian nuclear policy.

Chapter 7: Decision: 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement

7.1 Introduction

Upon leaving office, the Clinton administration had made limited progress in improving relations with India following the nadir of the early days after the 1998 tests. However, it had still organised its India policy around pressuring New Delhi to join the Nonproliferation Treaty, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and other nonproliferation-based demands.
By contrast, the incoming Bush administration had signified an interest in improving relations with India, including a willingness to downgrade the nuclear issue from its status as the defining interest of American policy toward India as under the Clinton administration. [258] Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee had depicted the United States and India as "natural allies" in September 2000, and closer bilateral relations appeared to be a real possibility in the early months of the Bush administration.[259] An early sign of these intentions were the remarks of US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill following the December 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament buildings, claiming that both India and the United States were partners in a mutual struggle against terrorism.[260]

However, Washington was at first distracted by the 9/11 attacks, and the following responses it selected in the forms of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.[261] While it focused on these

[258] In his first substantive address on the bilateral relationship in September 2001, US Ambassador Robert Blackwill reframed the nuclear issue as merely being one of mutual general strategic concern, rather than the previous US approach of portraying India as an outlier to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. In his words, the US "has an equal interest in the shape and substance of India's nuclear policy. This mutual preoccupation by our two countries seems entirely natural since each capital wants to make sure that the other takes no steps in the nuclear arena that could destabilise strategic and regional instability". Satu P. Limaye, "U.S.-India Relations: Visible to the Naked Eye", Comparative Connections Vol. 3 No. 4 (January 2002).

[259] Asia Society, "Address by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee", New York, September 7, 2000.

[260] Celia W. Dugger, "Group in Pakistan is Blamed by India for Suicide Raid", New York Times, December 15, 2001.

[261] John Cherian, "Diplomatic Concerns", Frontline, November 9, 2001; Lawrence Saez, "India in 2002: The BJP's Faltering Mandate and the Morphology of Nuclear War", Asian Survey Vol. 43 No. 1 (January/February 2003) pp. 186-190.

endeavours, a major US effort to revisit the core assumptions of its India policy and improve the bilateral relationship was temporarily put on hold.

Recognising the need to continue the project of improving US-India relations, the Bush administration launched Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) rounds of bilateral strategic dialogue with India in January 2004. While principally focusing on opportunities for escalated defence cooperation, the talks also included nuclear matters.

Initial outcomes from the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership talks included a US presentation on Patriot PAC-3 ballistic missile defence system capabilities to Indian defence officials, and discussions on improving space cooperation and high-technology trade.[262] However, both parties were well aware of the nuclear issue as the main block to improving mutual trust and substantive expansion of the bilateral strategic relationship. Talks focused on ways in which the US-Indian nuclear differences could be bridged, in a way that would respect Indian nuclear strategic autonomy but still find an accommodation with the values and norms, if not the letter, of the NPT-based global nonproliferation system so as to be acceptable to the US domestic polity.

These efforts culminated in a US-Indian joint statement on July 18, 2005, that suggested the outlines of a mutually satisfactory compromise. At the core of the statement was an American promise of full civil nuclear cooperation with India in return for an Indian commitment to separate its civil from its military nuclear facilities, place the former under IAEA safeguards, and coordinate its arms control policies with those of the Missile Technology Control Regime and Nuclear Suppliers Group.[263]

Proceeding to implement this proposal would bring great benefits for the United States and India. For the United States, lifting the sanctions would permit American firms access to India's booming energy infrastructure and technology market; cultivate India as a like-

[262] US State Department, "United States-India Joint Statement on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership", September 17, 2004. Available at http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/36290.htm; Sanjoy Majumder, "India Briefed on Patriot Missile", BBC News, September 9, 2005.

[263] US State Department, "Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh", July 18, 2005. Available at http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/pr/2005/49763.htm

minded democratic partner as the United States sought to set the terms of China's rise; and integrate India into the global nonproliferation regime. For India, an agreement would mean that the technology sanctions it had lived with for decades would finally be lifted, raising its economic and scientific potential; and it would no longer suffer the international image of nuclear pariah, and instead be recognised by the world's only superpower as an important rising power.

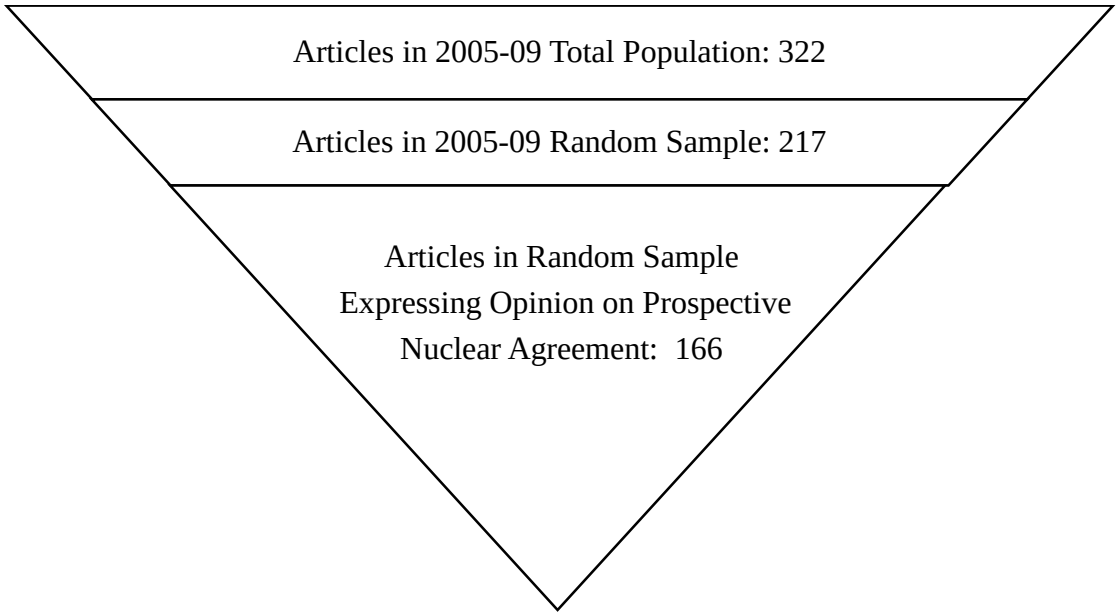
Nevertheless, for New Delhi, this proposal did not entirely consist of benefits for India. Indeed, the government faced two often-unappealing choices once the proposal became public knowledge in July 2005. Proceeding to implement the agreement would involve fending off domestic accusations that the government had sacrificed its foreign policy independence; tied India into an American-led Asian security bloc against China; and trapped the Indian nuclear programme in a web of international oversight commitments.

However, deciding not to advance the agreement would jeopardise the Indian diplomatic relationship with the United States; leave the sanctions regime in place; and raise domestic questions regarding its ability to build the necessary energy infrastructure and attract economic investment in the absence of the benefits that the agreement would bring.
Indeed, the revelation of the draft agreement ignited a firestorm of domestic debate, with the highest numerical volume of commentary in any of our policy discourses examined thus far. The debate included searching questions as to the ultimate direction of India's great power rise; what kind of relationship it wanted with the United States; and the ability of its government to indigenously produce the scientific and energy resources needed by itself without such an agreement. The sense that the ultimate decision on this proposal would be a dramatic juncture for Indian history, and perhaps decide its future trajectory as a rising power, characterised the heat and size of this debate.

7.2 Balance of Opinion in Strategic Discourse on 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement Decision

One hundred and sixty-six articles in the random sample expressed an opinion on a prospective nuclear agreement with the United States.

Figure 21: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Prospective Nuclear Agreement with United States



Of these one hundred and sixty-six articles, ninety-six supported implementing a nuclear agreement and seventy opposed this. As we will see below, this finely divided discourse was also represented in the policy options promoted, several of which sought dramatically different nuclear routes for India, with their recommended position on the nuclear agreement as a first step toward those different goals. This further reflects the sense within the discourse of the nuclear agreement decision as a major inflection point that would decide much of India's nuclear future.

7.3 Attitude Score

The gradual development of maximalist nuclear policy sentiments within the discourse over the course of our study, plus the balanced divisions of opinion on this policy question, was also highlighted in the attitude score of **0.07** for this episode. With articles coded as '0' removed from this calculation, the attitude score becomes **0.14.**

This was the most centrist score yet on the attitude spectrum between pro-restraint (-1) and pro-maximal (1) poles. This score was slightly less pro-maximal than the 2001-3 nuclear

doctrine episode score of **0.18**. This episode therefore did not harbour as strong a pro-maximal constituency of opinion as the 2003 doctrine decision, which generated more pro-maximal sentiments due to its greater focus on operationalising India's nuclear arsenal and providing its deterrence credibility to adversaries. While the requirements for an effective arsenal did inform this discourse, these now also shared space with discussions on the kind of power India wished to be and the economic and energy benefits it would obtain from the agreement.

Table 25: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-98 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-99 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.18**
6. 2005-08 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.07**

Table 26: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.66**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.8**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.2**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.14**

7.4 Polarisation of Debate

The polarisation index was **0.71** for this decision. This suggested a fairly polarised discourse, albeit not as polarised as several previous episodes. This score resulted from the high number of articles receiving a '0' value coding – meaning they expressed an opinion on nuclear policy, but not one that held a pro-maximal ('1') or pro-minimalist ('-1') view regarding the preferred size of India's nuclear force. Indeed, with articles coded as '0' removed from this calculation, the polarisation index indicates extreme polarisation, at **0.99**. This discourse did to a large extent feature a policy discussion on Indian nuclear policy, but often not that concerning ideal force role and size. This polarisation index was therefore slightly less

polarised on the question of arsenal size than previous discourses, such as that on the 2003 nuclear doctrine, that focused on the preferred future of the arsenal in much greater detail.

Table 27: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions

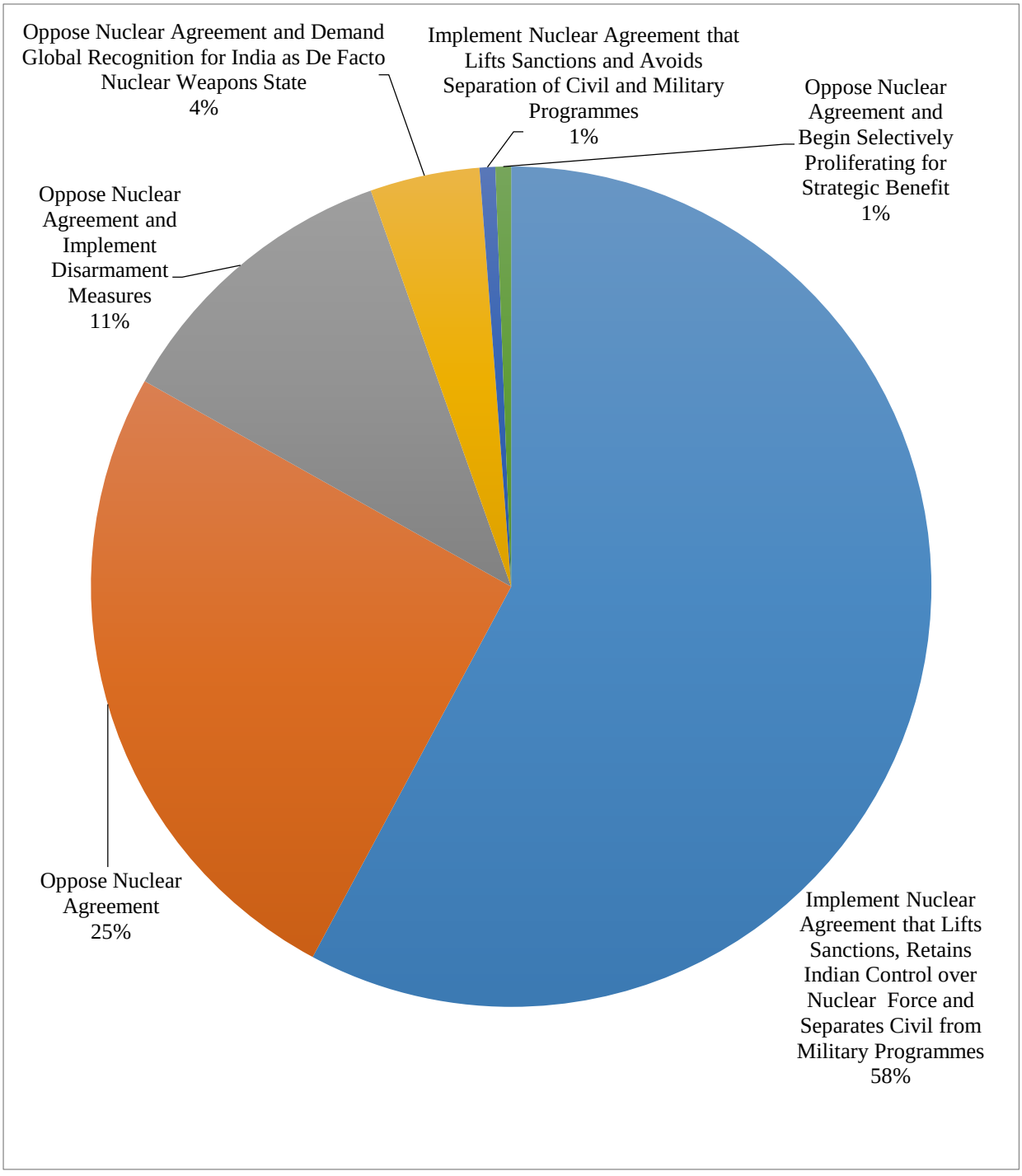
Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-98 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-99 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.74**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.62**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.95**
6. 2005-08 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.71**

Table 28: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.76**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.61**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**1.01**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.99**

7.5 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

Figure 22: Policy Options Promoted in 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement Discourse



Option 1: Implement Nuclear Agreement that Lifts Sanctions, Retains Indian Control over Nuclear Force and Separates Civil from Military Programmes (58%)

This discourse was similar to that of the 1997-8 episode concerning a prospective shift of Indian nuclear policy toward overt nuclear deterrence and nuclear tests, in that one side of the argument remained largely united at the level of policy options. Where arguments in favour of an overt deterrence policy had largely filtered into one concentrated policy option in the 1997-8 episode, here arguments in favour of a nuclear agreement were similarly mostly represented by a single concentrated policy option. Indeed, only one article out of the ninety-six that favoured implementing a nuclear agreement did not support this policy option. This ensured that this policy option represented nearly sixty percent of the discourse, giving it a very strong chance of becoming selected as government policy based upon the past episodes we have analysed.

Arguments for this policy option represented a nuclear agreement as a balanced deal with the United States and other powers that would lift the nuclear sanctions hindering Indian development; highlight India's willingness to shed old shibboleths and take pragmatic stances in foreign policy; and signify its acceptance by other states as a responsible rising power committed to nuclear restraint. A *Hindustan Times* editorial in March 2005 sketched an outline of what an acceptable agreement could look like, which closely resembled the proposal in the US-India joint statement of July 2005:

> *"India seeks recognition as a responsible nuclear state. Big powers don't agree, and express that point of view through the NPT, the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, and the Zangger Committee. Part of that disagreement is to do with protecting technology turf. But India doesn't gain by not budging. It doesn't allow international inspection of domestically built facilities and of the weapons programme. It loses out on technology and funding. India has an impeccable record, rather unlike our neighbour's, on not selling nuclear technology. A bargain could be first to allow inspection of all power reactors and then talk of safeguards for other civilian use facilities. Weapons facilities, of course, should always remain a solely Indian business. If India shows transparency, it could demand flexibility."*[264]

[264] Editorial, "Needed: New Clear Policy", Hindustan Times, March 7, 2005.

This highlighted the essential Indian compromise at the heart of an agreement: seeing the sanctions lifted in return for structurally separating the military from the civilian nuclear facilities, and permitting international oversight over the latter. A similar arrangement operated in regard to NPT nuclear weapons states and the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the agency monitoring operations and safety at civilian nuclear facilities while leaving operation of the military nuclear programme to national discretion. The article specified the immediate material benefits for India for acquiescing to this arrangement: no longer would it *"lose out on technology and funding"*, and the agreement would represent India's *"recognition as a responsible nuclear state"*.

However, following the July 2005 announcement, the potential of such an agreement as the new foundation for improved Indian relations with the United States also became a principal supporting argument for this policy option. The perceived value of wishing to improve relations with Washington, as we will see in the other policy options, was one of the principal points of contestation in this episode. However, commentators supporting this policy option desired a strengthened Indian relationship with the United States, and also saw this prospective agreement as the culmination of longstanding Indian diplomatic efforts to bridge the nuclear impasse that had distanced the states for so long. A *Hindustan Times* editorial made this point:

> *"The Indo-US nuclear deal is simultaneously a lubricant for a much larger meshing of the two countries, a confidence-building measure to sooth Indian egos bruised by half a century of difficult relations, as well as an invaluable technological input to assure a degree of autonomy for our growing energy demands. Besides being rid of a crippling embargo on its nuclear power programme, India has been implicitly recognised as a nuclear weapons state by the US, a handsome achievement by any count."*[265]

The new Congress-led government that had taken office in 2004 had unveiled the proposed agreement. The Left parties within the new governing coalition, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), now out of government for the first time in our study, began to fiercely oppose

[265] Editorial, "Starting All Over", Hindustan Times, March 5, 2006.

implementing an agreement. Given that the BJP had assiduously sought to improve strategic relations with the United States throughout its recent National Democratic Alliance (NDA) period in office, its decision to now oppose this next step as damaging to Indian interests was roundly criticised by authors in this category as prioritising partisan over national interests. A *Times of India* editorial criticising the BJP for this stance detailed precisely what was at stake for India in failing to implement the agreement:

> *"Discussions on the nuclear deal began when the NDA government was in power, yet the Bharatiya Janata Party has suddenly woken up to the effects of the deal on India's bomb-making capacity. This unexpected piece of political theatre could have grave economic fallouts. Investors could turn tail, not being sure of whether policies today will be overturned tomorrow. Direct investment brings with it jobs, know-how and market linkages, all of which could suffer. Nuclear energy was meant to plug a growing proportion of India's power deficit, a critical infrastructural shortfall. If the deal is not coming, long-term investors will start to wonder whether India is serious about addressing its infrastructure bottlenecks."*[266]

Authors in this category also frequently portrayed an agreement in terms of its symbolism for India's rise in the world. An agreement promised to greatly lift India's economic and technology development potential, and would signify India no longer being treated as a nuclear pariah by other states. These authors argued for this end goal to be kept in mind. A *Telegraph* editorial highlighted the symbolic gains that India would accrue by implementing an agreement:

> *"India no longer sits below the salt. It has been called to the high table. But India's foreign policy and India's outlook on the world have to grow into the stature to which India has been elevated. Only then can the champagne be uncorked."*[267]

The argument in favour of implementing an agreement therefore had several supportive planks. An agreement would boost India's economic, energy and technology development; signify its recognition by other world powers as a responsible, restrained nuclear state; and

[266] Editorial, "Shock Exchange", Times of India, August 23, 2007.

[267] Editorial, "Growing Up", Telegraph, March 4, 2006.

improve relations with the United States, then the world's only superpower. This case was further strengthened by the constitution of its supporters. These were largely centrist newspaper editorials, but with a smaller concentration of defence scholars and retired ambassadors. Given that this policy option both held nearly sixty percent of the support of this discourse and nearly all of centrist opinion in the political spectrum, this therefore strongly suggested, based upon the pattern from our past episodes, that the option would correlate with the eventual government decision.

Option 2: Oppose Nuclear Agreement (25%)

This was the second most popular policy option, and gathered together those commentators who entirely rejected the premise of the agreement. These authors, who principally consisted of BJP parliamentarians, very hawkish and pro-BJP defence analysts, and notably nuclear scientists, strongly opposed the concept of the agreement as an unacceptable sacrifice of Indian foreign and defence policy independence and urged that New Delhi entirely walk away from these negotiations. A former BJP Minister of External Affairs outlined the party's view of the proposed agreement:

> *"…the US objective, from the very beginning, has been to draw India, through this deal, into the discriminatory and restrictive international regime set up primarily against us after 1974, and to cap, roll back and eliminate India's nuclear weapons programme."*[268]

This concern – that the agreement represented a Trojan horse through which the United States would gain control over the Indian nuclear programme and demand limits to India's nuclear force planning – also underlay the objections of several retired nuclear scientists to the agreement. This formed a change from previous discourses, as the entry of nuclear scientists into public discourse on a policy question had not been notably seen since the 1998 debate on ending nuclear opacity and moving toward overt nuclear deterrence. These scientists often said they were speaking on behalf of colleagues still working for the defence scientific agencies. A former chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission admitted that

[268] Yashwant Sinha, "Scrap the Accord", India Today, August 27, 2007.

professional pride influenced their public intervention here, as implementing the agreement would implicitly admit that they had failed to indigenously generate technology and energy supplies sufficient for India's needs:

> *"Call it pride or whatever, the scientific community will fight to the last to keep the nuclear programme out of IAEA safeguards, whichever the government in power. Those who are criticising the scientists without understanding are doing disservice to the Indian nuclear programme."*[269]

Hawkish pro-BJP defence scholars, supportive of a maximal nuclear force, formed the third pillar of support for this policy option. They worried that a closer partnership with the United States through the agreement would lead India to impose limits on its nuclear force development in line with American nonproliferation policy preferences. This concern even extended to fears that Indian self-restraint was already being imposed as preparation for implementing a final agreement, as a prominent hawkish scholar claimed:

> *"What was to be a credible minimal deterrent has become a minimal credible deterrent where credibility is at a minimum. Nothing better illustrates this than the February 3 statement of the DRDO chief that the Agni-3 is ready for test-launch but that he still awaits the political go-ahead. In which other country do scientists confront a political hold-up of a missile test or are compelled to blow the whistle on the shadowy pressures over a nuclear deal? Is this how our enlightened PM would like to be remembered - a hawk on Iran but a wimp on India's own capabilities?"*[270]

These articles attracted a quarter of support from the discourse, representing a substantial body of opinion. However, they notably did not recommend an alternative policy course to provide the economic, technology and energy benefits that India would gain through the agreement, nor suggest a means for India to see the sanctions lifted. Furthermore, two of the three sources of support for this policy option – BJP parliamentarians and hawkish defence analysts – were normally highly critical of the ruling Congress party, and these sources did

[269] "Do Not Trust Americans on India-US Nuclear Deal, Says Scientist", Hindustan Times, February 23, 2006.

[270] Brahma Chellaney, "Aim Before You Shoot", Hindustan Times, February 17, 2006.

not include a substantial volume of centrist political support. These characteristics for this policy option therefore diminished its chances of becoming selected by government as policy.

Option 3: Oppose Nuclear Agreement and Implement Disarmament Measures (11%)

This policy option encapsulated the opinion of the anti-nuclear, pro-disarmament radical left. In this reading, a nuclear agreement was to be rejected not due to its hypothesised potential to limit the boundaries of Indian nuclear force development, but because it would represent international legitimisation of India's possession of the bomb. However, a commonality was found with those authors opposing an agreement for hawkish reasons in their mutual fear of a loss of Indian foreign policy independence to the future whims of Washington that an agreement would introduce. These sentiments were expressed in a report from an anti-nuclear seminar discussing a prospective agreement:

> *"Describing the Indo-US nuclear treaty as an 'unholy alliance', Praful Bidwai said it changed India's longterm stand on nuclear disarmament. 'We are losing our independence', he said, adding that 'India voted against Iran's nuclear project in UN under US pressure'. Gauhar Raza, a scientist and media personality, speaking on nuclear disarmament, said 'People say that a nuclear arms free world is impossible. But 100 years back India's independence from the mighty British empire also seemed impossible."*[271]

The principal worry in this opinion category was indeed of the Indian bomb being made permanent by the international recognition of India's nuclear status that an agreement would imply. An Indian nuclear bomb that was internationally accepted was no less dangerous to Indian, regional and global security, this argument ran, and familiarly concluded with a call for the Indian government to finally listen to this wisdom and dismantle its nuclear weapons programme. The trajectory for Indian and regional security appeared dark if the agreement was implemented and a globally accepted Indian nuclear force programme was allowed to expand, as a Communist commentator warned:

[271] "Call to Work for N-Disarmament", Times of India, October 15, 2006.

"There is accordingly always the danger of an agreement signed with New Delhi during the tenure of one regime being annulled by a succeeding one; no such risk exists in Pakistan. Third, India's main opposition party is being taken over 'lock, stock and barrel' by the extremist Vishwa Hindu Parishad. In case in the next election the Congress-led government loses and the Bharatiya Janata Party takes over, the Indian bomb could well pass into the hands of the wild ones in the VHP. These people might then rain the bomb on Pakistan. The consequences could be far-reaching."[272]

This policy option concurred with that of the previous policy option supported by hawkish and pro-BJP authors on the likely loss of Indian foreign policy independence. In chasing an agreement, the Indian government risked entering the American web of treaty commitments and suborning its future foreign policy to American preferences, as a newspaper editor predicted:

"So, the game is to balance three Asian props of American power to best serve the US. Of course, the arrangement offers them attractive dividends too, as well as scope for bargaining. It might even allow India to take steps on its own to curb terrorist attacks, but never at the expense of the overarching framework of American interests."[273]

Despite the fact that this policy option and the previous one obtained their support from opposite ends of the political spectrum, they were similar in some aspects, including: their advocacy that an agreement be rejected; their support by authors who would oppose most of the policy agenda of the sitting government; and the paucity of centrist opinion supporting these options. As with the previous policy option, these attributes rendered its chances of becoming policy very unlikely.

[272] Ashok Mitra, "Terror Will Come Home", Telegraph, August 5, 2005.

[273] Sunanda K. Datta-Ray, "Balancing Game", Telegraph, March 11, 2006.

Option 4: Oppose Nuclear Agreement and Demand Global Recognition for India as De Facto Nuclear Weapons State (4%)

This policy option represented an occasional variant to the hawkish rejectionist sentiments represented by Option 2, to oppose the nuclear agreement as it hindered India's ability to field a maximal nuclear force. Authors in this category held this same diagnosis of an agreement, but instead argued that India could only accede to a revised agreement that granted it all the rights of nuclear weapons states under the NPT and little, if any concessions from India in return. A *Telegraph* correspondent outlined this current of opinion within the BJP:

> *"What is extremely disturbing for the (BJP) party is (US Secretary of State Condoleezza) Rice's unequivocal statement that 'India is not and is not going to become a member of the NPT (as) a nuclear weapons state', and that 'this initiative with India does not seek to renegotiate or amend the NPT'. The only way India can gain the status of a nuclear weapons state is through the NPT, but that option has been shut by Rice on New Delhi's face. Under these circumstances, it is the BJP's view that going ahead with the nuclear deal in its present format will be tantamount to India accepting a permanent backward status in the global nuclear arena."*[274]

These contributors did not accept the notion of an agreement as requiring any concessions from India in order for sanctions to be lifted; India was inherently a legitimate nuclear weapons state, and it was fully incumbent on other states to finally recognise their error and remove the sanctions regime. For the Indian government to fail to see this point and plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear programmes as the main price of an agreement was selling India short, as a pro-BJP defence scholar argued:

> *"The separation and identification of India's civilian nuclear facilities is no longer voluntary, it is no longer in phases, there is no recognition of India's nuclear weapon status because the safeguards are to operate in perpetuity, and India's nuclear*

[274] K.P. Nayar, "Time for a Hard Look", Telegraph, May 3, 2006.

weapon programme is sought to be capped...How then can we have a 'credible minimum deterrent' as envisaged in India's nuclear doctrine."[275]

This policy option was also partly supported by nuclear scientists in the debate, although these mainly supported Option 2, to entirely reject an agreement. The objection of the nuclear scientists here was to any notion of reorganisation of India's nuclear programme as a concession in an agreement. They held that India should seek to see the sanctions lifted without altering its nuclear scientific complex, as the *Hindustan Times* reported:

"Eminent nuclear scientists on Monday contended that the Indo-US nuclear deal infringed on India's indigenous research and development and appealed to MPs to ensure continuance of the nuclear option. 'India should be able to hold on to her nuclear option as a strategic requirement in the real world that we live in, and in the ever-changing complexity of the international political system...This means we cannot accede to any restraint in perpetuity of our freedom of action."[276]

This policy option was supported by the same sources as that of option 2 – BJP parliamentarians, hawkish defence analysts, and nuclear scientists. This formed a political constituency overall unsupportive of the general policy agenda of this Congress-led government. This characteristic, plus the fact that only 4% of the discourse supported this option, rendered it very unlikely that their arguments would become policy.

Option 5: Implement Nuclear Agreement that Lifts Sanctions and Avoids Separation of Civil and Military Programmes (1%)

Only one article made this suggestion, by former BJP defence minister K.C. Pant. Unlike most of his party colleagues, he overall supported the concept of India accepting some conditions from other states in return for seeing the removal of sanctions. However, he limited these possible conditions only to India's temporary acceptance of safeguards while

[275] "BJP Expresses Concern on US Official's Statement on Indo-US Relations", Hindustan Times, January 28, 2006.

[276] "Scientists Oppose N-Deal", Hindustan Times, August 14, 2006.

waiting for the final agreement to enter into force. He outlined his idea of the terms to which India should commit:

> *"It's reasonable to expect that the terms of its agreement with the US would be at least as favourable as the one with China. This means a permanent waiver, safeguards only during the pendency of the nuclear deal, provision to withdraw from the agreement, freedom to develop nuclear weapons (and delivery systems), voluntary test moratorium, and no safeguards in perpetuity."*[277]

Pant sought to undermine the concept of permanently restructuring the Indian nuclear programme, or accepting further-reaching conditions as part of an agreement, by highlighting that the United States had not asked these of China in negotiating a similar sanctions waiver in the 1980s:

> *"The US has a civilian nuclear agreement with China. As the energy and environment aspects are equally applicable to the Indo-US agreement, it would be instructive to compare the two agreements. China was not a signatory to the NPT in 1985 when the US Congress passed legislation enabling full nuclear co-operation with China. Moreover, when the US Congress gave its approval to the agreement, it had before it testimony that China was covertly assisting Pakistan's nuclear programme, spurning 'non-proliferation norms'."*[278]

India would find the political room to advance these arguments in dialogue with the United States, Pant held, by not losing perspective and wrongly assuming that the entire future of the US-India relationship rested on India's willingness to agree to separate its civil and military nuclear programme and other nonproliferation commitments that Washington may wish:

> *"The negotiators must view the nuclear agreement, not as a make-or-break issue in Indo-US relations, but as a test for the consistency of the logic in the strategic partnership between the two nations."*[279]

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[277] K.C. Pant, "Nuclear, in No Unclear Terms", Hindustan Times, May 8, 2006.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Ibid.

Given that only one article out of one hundred and sixty-six in the random sample made this case, its chances of influencing policy was minimal. However, this stands as an example of the diversity of debate on this policy decision, and, in the issues it highlighted, the sense throughout the discourse that this was a landmark moment in India's foreign policy history.

Option 6: Oppose Nuclear Agreement and Begin Selectively Proliferating for Strategic Benefit (1%)

This article, by a pro-BJP defence scholar who had regularly made maximalist policy recommendations in previous discourses, provided one of the most hawkish opinions in our entire study. It first took issue with one of the principal assumptions in this discourse, that India would only see nuclear and technological sanctions lifted by cooperation with other states. This assumption, the scholar argued, had deeper and more sinister roots in a lack of faith that India could indigenously generate the resources needed to rise to global power status. Along these lines, India repeatedly sought material assistance and political recognition of its importance from other states, rather than focusing its attentions on indigenous development:

> *"In contrast to India's fuzziness on goals, China, also ravaged by colonialism, has defined a clear objective for itself — to emerge as 'a world power second to none' — and is expanding its capabilities at the fastest pace possible. India strives more for external recognition than to build up its own economic and military strength, even though status comes with might."*[280]

A prospective nuclear agreement formed but the latest example of this damaging obsession with obtaining external validation and support for India's geopolitical aspirations. A bolder approach, which would win India the ultimate respect of other states, would be to follow Chinese practice and indigenously build its material capabilities to the extent that these made it too large a power not to be admitted to various international regimes. Provocatively, the

[280] Brahma Chellaney, "Lead Us Not into Temptation", Hindustan Times, July 17, 2005.

author extended this argument to suggest that India even begin proliferating nuclear technology, as China had used this tactic to build its sphere of influence:

> *"The itch to join every club, even if it's just a talk-shop or doesn't treat India fairly, needs to be contained. From showing up as an observer at the anaemic Shanghai Cooperation Organization to seeking membership of the US-led Nuclear Suppliers' Group even as it remains its target, India weakens its leverage...An invitation, however, will not come to a supplicant. The best way India can end the nuclear embargo against it is not by flaunting its 'impeccable non-proliferation credentials', as it childlike does, but by employing proliferation as a strategic card like China."*[281]

Given that India had cultivated through several previous policy discourses and decisions an international image of nuclear restraint, including refraining from nuclear proliferation, this would be a complete volte-face. Indeed, this was the first time in our study that an author had recommended that India begin proliferating. While this policy option shared a common assumption within the hawkish and pro-BJP body of opinion that India could somehow generate the same economic, energy and technology capabilities through committed autarky rather than lifting the sanctions, this specific recommendation was not shared anywhere else.

7.6 Summary

This discourse highlighted the continuing trend away from overwhelming support for nuclear restraint, seen at the outset of our study, and toward an equilibrium of balanced support for pro-restraint and pro-maximal policy approaches. This was emphasised by the attitude score for this discourse of 0.07, the most centrist score yet on the pro-maximal/pro-restraint spectrum. The polarisation index of 0.71, measuring the degree of consensus for maximalist or minimalist nuclear force policy, also signified polarisation on this issue. However, this was a relatively low degree of polarisation relative to that in previous episodes, due to the fact that the primary focus of this discourse was on a nuclear policy issue unrelated to this question of the ultimate structure of the nuclear force.

[281] Ibid.

The general dissensus regarding India's nuclear future, and relatively even support for maximalist and minimalist nuclear policies, was also visible in the sheer diversity of policy options within this discourse regarding a prospective international nuclear agreement to lift economic and technological sanctions upon India in return for some Indian concessions. Given that the 2001-3 doctrine decision had faced a similar cacophony of policy options, the tendency of the government decision to correlate with the option or options with the most centrist support might be replicated here.

7.7 Selecting an Option

While there were a similar wide range of policy options generated by the discourse as had been present in the previous 2001-3 doctrine decision, the policy option that looked most likely to correlate with the ultimate government decision successful was more visible in this episode: Option 1, to implement a nuclear agreement that lifts sanctions, retains Indian control over the nuclear force and separates the Indian civil and military nuclear programmes. Support for this option commanded 58% of the discourse, including the vast majority of centrist political voices. Given that past policy decisions correlated with the first or second most popular policy option in the discourse with a strong base of centrist support, these two attributes were most visibly present in the form of Option 1 here.

Three of the alternative policy options – Option 2, to oppose a nuclear agreement; Option 4, to oppose a nuclear agreement and instead demand that India simply receive the benefits from one; and Option 6, to oppose an agreement and begin building a sphere of influence through proliferation – were principally supported by pro-BJP and hawkish critics of the policy agenda of the Congress-led government, and held little centrist support. The most popular of these options, Option 2, had no recommendation for how India would alternatively lift the economic and technological sanctions in the absence of an international agreement that involved some Indian concessions.

The existence of these three options also signified a division of pro-BJP opponents of the agreement into three competing policy options, when they may have formed a weightier bloc in the debate if they were encapsulated in one option encompassing the 30% of the discourse that these three options individually did. The decision by K.C. Pant, a former BJP Defence

Minister, to contribute an article supportive of a nuclear agreement further divided support for policy options among this political constituency.

The remaining policy option, for India to oppose a nuclear agreement and instead begin the process of disarmament, represented the viewpoint of the radical and anti-nuclear left. However, this disarmament policy option, of which there has been a version in most of the episodes of this study, had now shrunk to attracting only 11% of support in the discourse. This highlighted the extent to which nuclear force possession was becoming an increasingly accepted fact of India's political identity and military planning in the discourse. Indeed, this balance of support meant that 89% of the discourse was instead engaged on the question on how best to balance lifting the sanctions against the risks these might bring for India's ability to further develop its nuclear force.

The government decision resembled Option 1. However, the tortuous path by which it did so emphasises the point made at the outset of our study regarding the mechanism of strategic discourse in creating the cognitive framework and political context that shapes available policy choices for the government, with the specific government path in considering, selecting and implementing these left to its own discretion. Indeed, despite the seeming dominance of Option 1 in the discourse, the government still sought to persuade supporters of the other policy options of the merits of the Option 1 argument. This process consumed much political time and energy, and at times threatened both its ability to implement a final agreement and its survival in office.

After the announcement of an agreement in principle with the United States in July 2005, the Indian government began the process of seeking to persuade the parliament of the merits of implementing an agreement, while tasking the Department of Atomic Energy to draw up how a division of the civilian and military nuclear programmes could take place. This process took three years, and even after securing parliamentary approval, the government could have decided not to implement an agreement at any point until securing an exemption from sanctions from the Nuclear Suppliers Group on September 6, 2008.

The government faced opposition from two principal angles, as prefigured in the discourse – BJP parliamentarians and hawkish defence analysts, and radical leftists. Both had strong positions in parliament – the government relied upon Left Front parties for its parliamentary

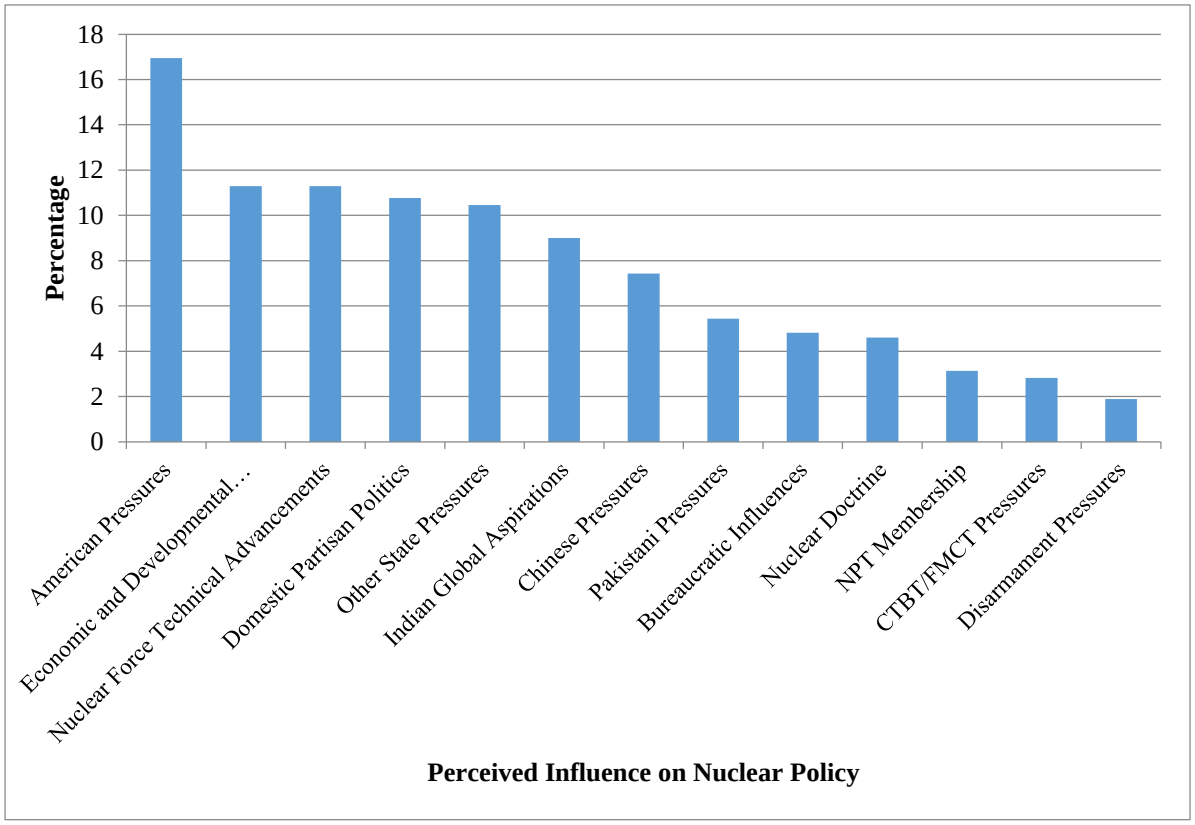
majority, while the BJP formed the official opposition. The government tried to persuade both of the advantages of an agreement, holding meetings with their senior leaders, but found unyielding resistance. This process of continual dialogue with little result lasted for several months.

Recognising the importance of this agreement, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh decided to break the impasse by making the issue a test of the government's strength in parliament. He reached out to other parties to replace the Left Front governing coalition members should they prefer to oppose the government rather than acquiesce to a nuclear agreement. The Left Front parties duly withdrew their support, and were replaced by enough support from the Samajwadi Party for the government to prove its majority and obtain parliamentary support for implementing an agreement. Following this success, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) approved an Indian proposal for how its civilian and military programmes would be divided, the former placed under safeguards, and the latter entirely untouched. The Nuclear Suppliers Group then agreed to waive its sanctions on India on September 6, 2008, bringing the agreement into fruition.[282] While the means by which the Indian government implemented this policy decision were therefore convoluted and drawn out, this decision still adhered to the same pattern we have seen throughout our study: the government policy correlates with the first or second most popular policy option, and crucially one obtaining substantial centrist political support, in the surrounding strategic discourse.

[282] For a full history of the negotiation process for the nuclear agreement, see Harsh V. Pant, *The U.S.-India Nuclear Pact: Policy, Process and Great Power Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

7.8 Issues Cited in 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement Discourse

Figure 23: Issues Cited in 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement Discourse



The top four issues cited in this discourse – American Pressures, Economic and Developmental Needs, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, and Domestic Partisan Politics – again accurately represented several of the core themes of this discourse. These were: the benefits and costs of a nuclear agreement with the United States for India's foreign and security policy, and whether a closer relationship with the United States was desirable; the economic, energy and technological gains that would accrue from an agreement, and whether these could be obtained without one; the ability of India to still develop a credible nuclear force under an agreement; and the fierce domestic political divisions and parliamentary manoeuvring that was a principal element of the public debate on this topic.

This was the highest ranking of Economic and Developmental Needs yet in the discourse, emphasising the centrality of the value and scale of economic and technological gains on offer for India through the agreement for the discourse. The fact that of the top four issues,

only one (American Pressures) was an external rather than domestic concern, highlighted the degree to which this debate was primarily about India's domestic needs and political identity, and the impact of this agreement upon these.

Table 29: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Prospective US-India Nuclear Agreement

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	0.33
NPT Membership Pressures	0.2
Bureaucratic Influences	0.11
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	0.1
American Pressures	0.09
Domestic Partisan Politics	0.09
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Prospective US-India Nuclear Agreement	*0.07*
Chinese Pressures	0.06
Indian Global Aspirations	0.06
Economic and Developmental Needs	0.03
Pakistani Pressures	-0.01
Other State Pressures	-0.05
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.11
Disarmament Pressures	-0.61

The exclusion of '0' articles has the effect of moving most of the above attitude scores further into the pro-maximalist column.

Table 30: Average Attitude Score of Articles Citing Influences on Nuclear Policy and Expressing Opinion on Prospective US-India Nuclear Agreement, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Influence on Nuclear Policy	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for minimalist nuclear policies)***
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	0.47
NPT Membership Pressures	0.23
Domestic Partisan Politics	0.19
American Pressures	0.18
Bureaucratic Influences	0.17
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	0.16
Mean Attitude Score for Sample Articles Expressing Opinion on Prospective US.-India Nuclear Agreement	*0.14*
Indian Global Aspirations	0.13
Chinese Pressures	0.1
Economic and Developmental Needs	0.06
Pakistani Pressures	-0.03
Nuclear Doctrine	-0.16
Disarmament Pressures	-0.73
Other State Pressures	-0.1

Issue: American Pressures

This influence was cited by nearly every article discussing this topic. There was strong debate in this discourse about the ultimate motives of the United States in offering to lead a multilateral process of lifting economic and technology sanctions on India in return for the separation of its civil and military nuclear programmes and placing the civilian network under international safeguards. The outcome of an agreement for US-India relations was also disputed, which reflected the views of various authors about the desirability of closer

strategic relations with the United States as opposed to protecting and promoting Indian independence in world affairs.

For articles supporting an agreement, the United States was presented more as a contracting party for business to be done with, rather than the object of an agreement in itself. Indians were encouraged to view the agreement in terms of the benefits it would bring for India, and not to focus on the United States or involve their opinions on that country in this debate. This cautious, contractual view of the United States among these articles amounted to far less than a full-throated call for bilateral strategic partnership, and evidently sought to reassure Indians that an agreement would still permit an independent Indian foreign policy.[283]

While articles in favour of this agreement demonstrated this contractual view in their presentation of the United States, those opposing a deal told a more emotive story of anti-Indian plots being woven in Washington. A concern that the agreement was a Trojan horse for the United States to obtain a veto on Indian foreign policy and ability to field a nuclear arsenal was the main plank of articles opposing an agreement.[284]

In adopting this suspicious stance toward the intentions of the United States, hawkish and pro-BJP opponents of a nuclear agreement sounded a similar tone to anti-nuclear and leftist radical commentators. However, while agreeing with conservative contributors that closer relations with the United States were the road to Indian subjugation, these authors differed in their unique concern that the agreement would permanently legitimise India's possession of the bomb and further reduce the chances of disarmament.[285]

These three principal presentations of the United States highlighted the deep suspicions of its intentions within India. Even proponents of an agreement, who would be expected to hold the most favourable views of the United States, carefully phrased their case in terms of a limited contractual negotiation with Washington. They also primarily framed the benefit in terms of gains to India's material capabilities, rather than to a desired partnership with the United States. Given that American Pressures was the most cited issue in this discourse, this

[283] Editorial, "America Discovers India", Hindustan Times, July 19, 2005.

[284] Press Trust of India, "N-Deal: 'US After India's Sovereignty'", Times of India, July 27, 2008.

[285] Praful Bidwai, "No Clear Reason", Frontline, March 10, 2006.

distrustful view of the United States within the Indian discourse alludes to the fierce domestic political and parliamentary divisions on the agreement.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

The benefits that an agreement would bring for building India's economic, energy and technological capabilities formed a principal element of arguments in its favour. To highlight the importance of these for India's future, some articles exaggerated the extent of India's need for the economic stimulation that could only be supplied through an agreement that lifted sanctions in return for some Indian concessions. One *Hindustan Times* editorial, for example, envisioned a shutdown of India's civilian and eventually military nuclear programmes in the absence of an agreement.[286]

However, given that these reputed economic benefits formed a principal selling point of an agreement, it was in the interests of articles opposing an agreement to minimise their expected impacts. Authors opposing an agreement did so by citing the economic dimensions of the debate less frequently, making their case on other grounds, and also by applying the Trojan horse logic to potential new investments that may arrive following an agreement. Grave suspicion was attached to these prospective new economic projects. A *Telegraph* commentator, for example, worried that these projects would be used by the United States to gain leverage over India in order to gain control of its nuclear force policy.[287]

The centrality of the United States in this discourse is further highlighted by the framing of this issue resembling that of the United States as above. The average attitude score of 0.03, slightly more pro-restraint than the average attitude score for this discourse, reflects the tendency for this issue to be cited in greater volumes by articles supporting a nuclear agreement. These articles had less pro-maximalist opinions than the hawkish, defiant drive to protect and field a large nuclear arsenal that many anti-agreement authors held.

[286] Editorial, "The End of Heroics", Hindustan Times, July 23, 2005.

[287] Bharat Bhushan, "Prize Deal Going Sour", Telegraph, February 13, 2006.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

Given that the United States had a long record of attempting to censure India for remaining outside the Nonproliferation Treaty with either a nuclear force or the latent option to field one, and that this proposed agreement represented a nuclear rapprochement with India, the status and degree of independent flexibility of India's nuclear force under this agreement was likely to form a principal concern for this discourse. Indeed, this was the third most cited issue, and the second most cited for opponents of the agreement. Supporters of an agreement either entirely disputed any potential for it to disrupt India's nuclear force planning, or at most argued that any disruptions would merely formalise decisions India had already independently made.[288]

However, opponents to the agreement pointed to the requirement in the United States legislation that the White House regularly report to Congress intelligence on India's nuclear force development, plus obtain Indian support on the CTBT, FMCT and in arresting Iran's shadowy nuclear activities, among other diplomatic initiatives. This, they held, proved the Trojan horse view of an agreement's effects. By implementing an agreement, India risked losing its option to develop a nuclear force.[289]

This argument, that India's nuclear force could be lost through an agreement, formed the principal objection of the BJP party to this measure. The tendency for this issue to be utilised more in service of pro-maximal arguments, as we have seen as a growing trend throughout our study, therefore returned with a vengeance here. A suspicious, imperialist view of the United States, plus a prioritisation of the independence of India's nuclear force development, constituted the main pillars of the hawkish, pro-BJP opposition to an agreement.

A minority of leftist critics still primarily cited this issue to warn of the potential of the agreement to legitimise India's nuclear force, and obscure its reality as an immoral waste of resources and threat to humanity.[290] However, the principal framing of this influence was still by opponents of an agreement with a maximalist reading that no barriers, real or hypothetical,

[288] Editorial, "Don't Nuke the Deal", Times of India, March 8, 2008.

[289] Brahma Chellaney, "Stop Chasing Illusions", Times of India, March 11, 2008.

[290] Achin Vanaik, "As Insecure as Before", Telegraph, August 4, 2005.

could be imposed on Indian nuclear force development capabilities. The appetite for restraint in the presentation of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in the 1997-8 overt nuclear deterrence and 1998-99 nuclear doctrine discourses was therefore being replaced with a more maximalist view built around this prioritisation of nuclear force development flexibility. The tendency for this issue to be prominently cited as a main influence in strategic discourse, and to be enlisted more in support of maximalist policy arguments, was therefore reconfirmed in this discourse. This point was further underlined by the average attitude score of 0.1 for articles citing this issue, forming the fourth most pro-maximal score in this discourse.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

This issue was the third most cited for the overall discourse and for articles favouring an agreement, and fourth most cited for opponents of an agreement. This difference is due to the recognition by pro-agreement articles of the need for domestic political and parliamentary approval for an agreement for it to be implemented, whereas opponents preferred to focus on their perceived dark intentions of the United States and, for pro-BJP and hawkish authors, the need to safeguard the Indian nuclear force from these.

Supporters of an agreement mainly cited this issue in the form of admonishing the BJP and Left Front parliamentary blocs for opposing an agreement and risking India's growth potential and international credibility. The government had taken painstaking efforts to meet with the leaders of these parties and patiently address each of their concerns with an agreement, these authors held, and there was now little rational reason for them to still stand in the way of its implementation.[291] For opponents of the agreement, the language was no less bitter. In their view, proceeding with an obviously flawed and dangerous agreement would form a betrayal of promises by the government to always ensure Indian foreign and security policy flexibility.[292]

This issue was mainly cited by supporters of the agreement and pro-BJP and hawkish opponents. It was rarely mentioned by leftist voices in the discourse, who organised most of

[291] K. Subrahmanyam, "Stop Bickering", Times of India, April 29, 2008.

[292] "BJP Wants Centre to Reject N-Deal", Times of India, December 11, 2006.

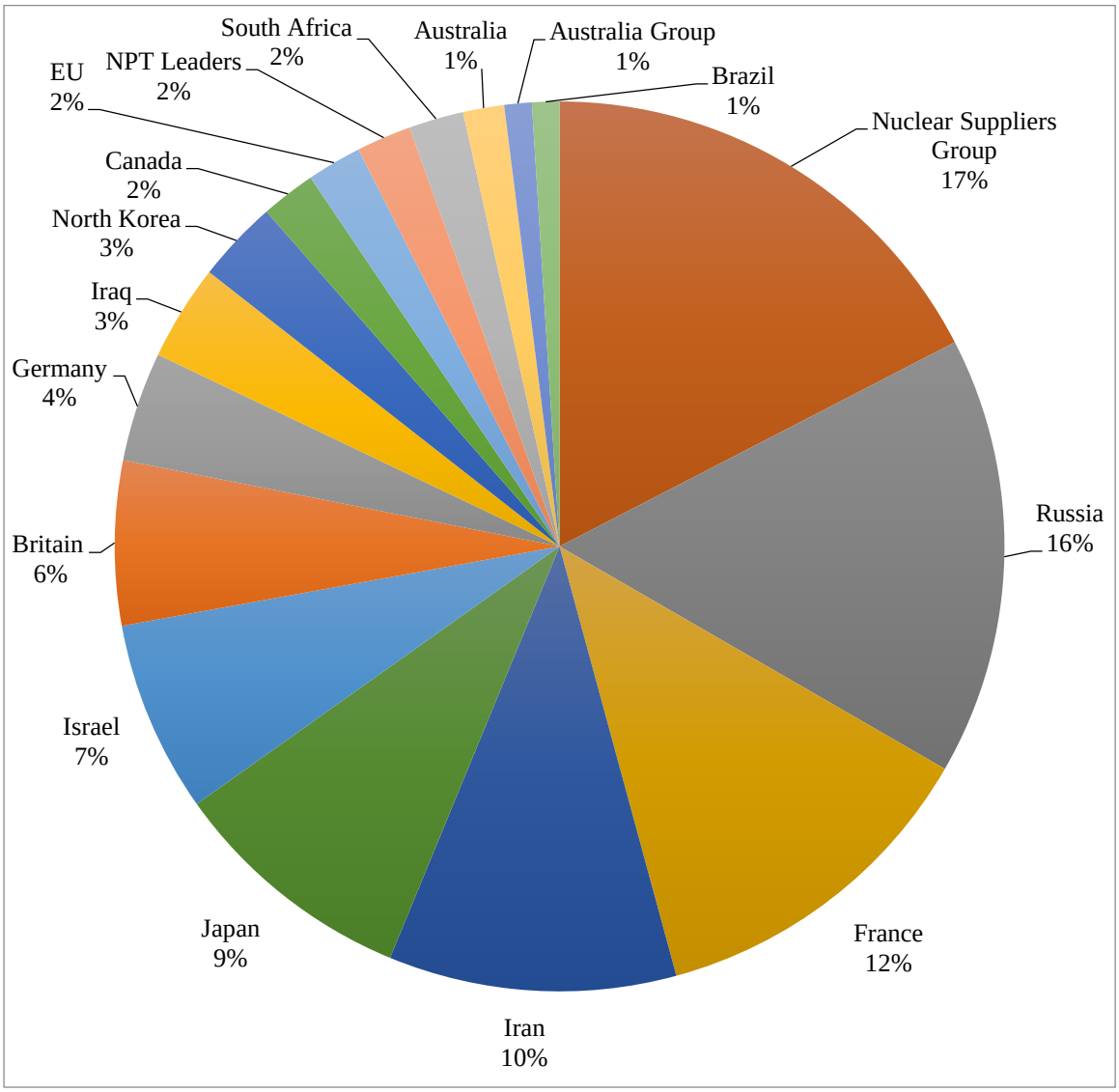
their argument around an imperialist view of American intentions. However, where they mentioned Domestic Partisan Politics, it was to vocally support the Left Front stance against the agreement.[293] The stark domestic political and parliamentary divisions in this discourse were thus emphasised by the accusations and counter-accusations of which party was placing Indian security at risk by their stance on a nuclear agreement.

Issue: Other State Pressures

States other than the United States, China and Pakistan were the fourth most cited influence in the overall discourse. This highlights the important international dimension for this discourse on an agreement, and the pervasive sense within the discourse that India's eventual decision on this issue would be momentous for its international profile and relations with many states. This issue was principally cited by supporters of the agreement, highlighting again that opponents tended to focus primarily upon concerns with the intentions of the United States and on the prospects of an independent Indian nuclear force following an agreement.

[293] Praful Bidwai, "Sanctifying Atomic Apartheid", Frontline, August 12, 2005.

Figure 24: Additional States Cited as Influences in 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement Discourse



This discourse featured a new most cited entity in this category: the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This was the grouping of NPT members prominent in nuclear technology trade markets, who agreed amongst themselves to limit nuclear trade with states, such as India, outside the NPT. A decision by this group to collectively exempt India from their trade sanctions on non-NPT states would ensure the benefits of a nuclear agreement would not be limited to that which the United States could deliver alone, and would mark the true lifting of multilateral nuclear sanctions upon India. As the decision of this group would mark the ultimate culmination of efforts to advance an agreement, the value of this goal and perceived conditions they would attach to an exemption was a frequent point of dispute within the discourse. Supporters

predictably framed an exemption as a necessity for India to work towards for its own future, while opponents worried that this aspect of the agreement would permanently subject India to the whims of other states.[294]

Russia and France, as the next two most cited states, were largely cited as a supporting cast in the service of arguments either for or against an agreement. For supporters, both states supported an agreement; suggested substantial future energy and technological cooperation with India; and served as examples of world powers whose ranks India would more quickly join by implementing an agreement.[295] For opponents, they had both risen to world power status through independent means and not by the help of other states, a path that India should emulate.[296]

The position of Iran as fourth most cited state in this category was due to the interweaving of the Iran nuclear dispute with the Indian debate on a nuclear agreement. While the United States Congress considered whether to permit an Indian exemption to American nuclear sanctions, the Bush administration escalated its diplomacy demanding that Iran fully reveal to the International Atomic Energy Agency the full nature of its nuclear activities and dispel looming suspicions that it was secretly conducting weapons research. Fears percolated among opponents to an agreement that this was precisely the kind of standoff for which a post-agreement New Delhi would be forcibly enlisted into a Washington-directed coalition of the willing, rather than being able to decide its own stance based upon its best interests. This rose to a crescendo with the vote of India to censure Iran for its lack of transparency with the IAEA in February 2006.

While the government and supporters of an agreement held that this stance had indeed been decided based upon an independent reading of India's interests in this case, opponents argued that this proved that the American imperium was already having its way with India.[297] This

[294] Yashwant Sinha, "Against National Interest", India Today, December 25, 2006.

[295] Editorial, "A Fruitless Venture", Hindustan Times, April 30, 2007.

[296] Brijesh D. Jayal, "Keeping the Pledge", Telegraph, May 15, 2006; Chellaney, "Aim Before You Shoot".

[297] Praful Bidwai, "Nuclear Poker over Iran", Frontline, February 10, 2006; K. Subrahmanyam, "Let's Believe in Ourselves", Times of India, August 20, 2007. For further background on India's stances on the Iranian nuclear issue at the IAEA, see Harsh V. Pant, "A Fine Balance: India Walks a Tightrope Between Iran and the United States", Orbis Vol. 51 No. 3 (Summer 2007) p. 502.

demonstrates the extent to which views of the United States shaped much of the discourse, as we can see that this debate on Iran was ultimately one on the effects of an agreement for American influence on Indian foreign and security policy.

This issue held the second most pro-restraint attitude score in this discourse, of -0.05. This reflects the tendency by supporters of an agreement to cite this issue, who were more confident in India's military nuclear capabilities and less inclined than opponents to see a maximal nuclear force as a desirable goal for India that must supercede the lifting of sanctions through an agreement.

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

The different framing of this issue by supporters and opponents of an agreement highlighted again the stark divisions within this discourse. This issue was the fifth most cited in the overall discourse, sixth most cited for supporters of an agreement and third most cited for opponents. In numerical terms, it was more cited by supporters due to their greater overall volume within this discourse. For supporters, an agreement would represent a true landmark in India's rise in the world, and an international recognition of its growing global power in the willingness of the United States and other states to rearrange the nuclear regime to accommodate only India.[298] However, for opponents, the agreement would not represent a true marker of India's independent rise to power, but the subjection of its foreign and security policy to American preferences. India under the agreement would no longer be able to act independently, as both leftist and pro-BJP, hawkish authors worried.[299]

Given that this issue was mainly cited by supporters, its attitude score was 0.06, slightly more pro-restraint than the overall attitude score for this discourse. The largely irreconciliable nature of these two views of India's foreign policy trajectory under an agreement highlighted the extent of dissensus on an agreement within the discourse.

[298] Editorial, "After the Deal", Telegraph, December 11, 2006.

[299] "N-Deal Unacceptable, No Turnaround in BJP Stand", Times of India, August 31, 2007; Ashok Mitra, "Enemy or Double?" Telegraph, August 15, 2008.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

This influence was the sixth most salient in the overall discourse, and tended to be cited more by supporters of an agreement than opponents. The average attitude score of 0.06, slightly more pro-restraint than the average attitude score, underlines this weighting toward citation by supporters.

Supporters argued that an agreement could help lift India's economic and energy potential to be comparable to that of China, and generally reduce the gap in their material capabilities.[300] However, hawkish and pro-BJP opponents worried about potential American-imposed restrictions on India's nuclear arsenal development hindering its ability to militarily compete with China.[301]

Leftist, anti-nuclear opponents also framed the China issue in terms of a loss of Indian policy flexibility, but rather locating this loss in nuclear force development, suggested it would be most felt in India's bilateral relations with China. India would henceforth be locked into an American coalition of the willing against China, these authors felt.[302]

These presentations echoed the core themes of the arguments for and against an agreement: supporters focused on the Indian economic, energy and technological development that would accrue from an agreement, as well as its symbolism for India as a rising power. Opponents focused on a perceived loss of Indian foreign and security policy flexibility, here presented either as India facing limits on its nuclear force development or being marshalled into an American-led geopolitical concert against China.

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

The sense within this discourse of the disputed intentions of the United States as one of the most important issues deciding for authors whether they should support an agreement or not

[300] Amit Baruah, "Hindi-Chini, Nuclear Bhai", Hindustan Times, July 22, 2008.

[301] "Many Compromises in N-Deal", Hindustan Times, July 26, 2008.

[302] Praful Bidwai, "Nuclear Deal at What Price?", Frontline, March 24, 2006.

was further highlighted by the relative relegation of Pakistan here, to seventh most cited in the discourse. Pakistan in this discourse was largely deployed as part of the background canvas of states marshalled in support of the author's particular recommendation, much as the treatment of Russia and France in the Other State Issues category. For supporters, Pakistan was frequently listed as part of the array of opponents to an agreement, implying that Indians would not want to find themselves on the same side as Islamabad on this issue.[303]

However, an interesting second framing among supporters was to highlight that a nuclear agreement could advance India's long-held aim of being seen as a different category of state to Pakistan, and no longer being grouped together as two sides of the same coin by other states. India should therefore grasp this agreement, which had not been offered to Pakistan.[304]

However, opponents cited Pakistan to support their argument of the perceived subjugation of India to American wishes that the agreement would entail. Focusing on the close anti-terrorist security policy co-ordination of Washington and Islamabad following the September 11 attacks, Indian opponents to an agreement worried that a nuclear agreement would be the gateway for Washington to subsequently control Indian foreign and security policy.[305]

The most interesting point regarding this issue was the lack of analysis of Pakistan's intentions, which had been major facets of several previous episodes. Pakistan was here presented prominently as a canvas upon which to read American regional intentions, highlighting again the shadow that the influence of the United States cast over this discourse.

Issue: Bureaucratic Influences

The importance of this influence to the discourse is slightly disguised by its now-familiar low ranking in the hierarchy of influences. This issue was the eighth most cited in the overall discourse, ninth most cited for articles supporting an agreement and seventh most cited for opponents to an agreement. However, despite this issue occupying its traditional position in

[303] Editorial, "Lotus and Commisssar", Times of India, August 22, 2007.

[304] K. Subrahmanyam, "We're Not a Rogue State", Times of India, September 3, 2008.

[305] Vikram Sood, "Chicken Feed for the Soul", Hindustan Times, March 14, 2006.

our study as one of the least most cited influences, there was a dramatic increase in the visibility and energy by members of the nuclear scientific bureaucratic enclave in this episode. The volume of contributions to this discourse – one hundred and sixty-six articles in our random sample – means that the forty-six articles that cited Bureaucratic Influences still assumed a low ranking in the hierarchy of influences, despite this constituting a large increase from several previous episodes in which they were only cited by a handful or no articles.

Indeed, both supporters and opponents of an agreement recognised the intervention of retired nuclear scientists, speaking on behalf of their colleagues still working for the agencies, as a shaping force in this debate. With reference to their ostensibly unparalleled knowledge of the true requirements and capabilities of the Indian nuclear programme, the scientists argued that a nuclear agreement, and any division of the nuclear estate into "civilian" and "military" realms, would inherently threaten India's nuclear force development.[306]

Supporters of an agreement recognised the stature and influence of these particular opponents, and frequently sought to undermine their case as a means to persuading Indians of the ultimate value of an agreement. One tactic was to highlight the alleged uranium shortages facing India, to illustrate that the policy option of continued autarky preferred by the scientists – Option 2, oppose an agreement – had evidently failed in bringing India to this crisis.[307]

For opponents, of which the scientists formed an important constituency, their intervention was presented as a technocratic, impartial assessment of India's nuclear requirements which should be listened to.[308] Leftist opponents to an agreement, however, framed the scientists as part of the constellation of destructive pro-nuclear vested interests that only real progress toward disarmament would disempower.[309] This illustrates the divisions among anti-

[306] This culminated in the publication of an open letter making these points by several eminent retired nuclear scientists to Parliament. For the text of the letter, see H. Sethna et al, "Appeal to Parliamentarians on the Indo-US Nuclear Deal," August 14, 2006, available at http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/appeal-to-parliamentarians-on-nuclear-deal/article3090406.ece

[307] K. Subrahmanyam, "Running Out of Time", Times of India, June 4, 2008.

[308] G.S. Mudur, "'Meddling' Fuel Feeds Nuclear Fire", Telegraph, February 9, 2006.

[309] Bidwai, "No Clear Reason".

agreement supporters that was visible in the array of policy options at the outset of this chapter.

The average attitude score for articles citing this issue, 0.11, was the third most pro-maximal in this discourse. This further reflects the influence of these maximalist voices in the discourse. The intervention of the scientists in this episode had not been seen on this scale since the 1998 overt nuclear deterrence chapter, which was perhaps the last policy decision to have as directly affected their bureaucratic interests. They formed a prominent pillar of the anti-agreement front in this episode.

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

This issue was the ninth most cited in the overall discourse, eighth most cited among opponents and eleventh most cited among supporters. The higher ranking among opponents was due to their conception of the agreement as a threat to India's ability to independently build a nuclear force commensurate with the doctrine it had set out. However, the low ranking of this issue across the discourse was primarily due to the primary focus of this episode upon the intentions of the United States, the economic, energy and technology gains on offer, and the effects of an agreement upon the nuclear force. The doctrine here was largely presented as an extended examination of this third topic, of the effects upon the nuclear force. Indeed, supporters and opponents alike viewed doctrinal questions as a second-order implication of their primary shared concern with nuclear force development flexibility.[310]

Most leftist voices, who formed a minority in citations of this issue, cited nuclear doctrinal issues to criticise the looming entrenchment of nuclear deterrence as an internationally accepted posture for India through an agreement. For these authors too, this issue was but a facet of their ultimate argument concerning nuclear force possession.[311]

[310] K. Subrahmanyam, "Will Partisan Politics Nuke a Good Deal?", Times of India, July 22, 2005; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "Intellectual Dishonesty of the Highest Order (Interview with Yashwant Sinha)", Frontline, September 7, 2007.

[311] Vanaik, "As Insecure as Before".

The attitude score of -0.11 for articles citing this issue, as the third most pro-restraint score, highlights the pattern seen in previous episodes for this issue to be a main device for pro-restraint arguments. With an even numerical balance of citations among articles supporting or opposing an agreement, the tendency for pro-agreement articles to cite this issue to reaffirm that India's doctrine of nuclear restraint would continue unhindered under an agreement, and for opponents to worry about an agreement hindering India's ability to field an arsenal in support of its nuclear restraint principles, explains the continuance of this pattern in this discourse.

Issue: NPT Membership Pressures

This issue obtained an average attitude score of 0.2 for articles citing it, the second most pro-maximal score in this discourse. The continuing opposition across the discourse to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was shown in its framing by both supporters and opponents, neither of whom evinced any support for it. For supporters, an agreement would allow India to finally square the circle of ensuring international recognition of its nuclear restraint without it being compelled to sign the NPT.[312] However, for hawkish opponents, the NPT was an occasional part of their Trojan horse view of the agreement.[313] Leftist opponents, for their own part, worried about an agreement compelling an Indian rapprochement with the NPT, and ending India's historic opposition to the inequitable treaty.[314]

Issue: CTBT/FMCT Pressures

This issue, the least cited in the discourse and very much an ancillary background element in this episode, was framed in similar terms to the NPT membership pressures issue. Supporters of an agreement either pointed to the fact that India was not being compelled to sign the CTBT as part of an agreement as another sign of its true value for India, or admitted that

[312] K. Subrahmanyam, "Let's Believe in Ourselves", Times of India, August 20, 2007.

[313] Srinivas Laxman, "Don't Uncork the Bubbly: Naysayers", Times of India, November 19. 2006.

[314] Ramesh Thakur, "Nuclear Double Standards", Times of India, October 15, 2007.

elements of the negotiation such as India continuing a voluntary testing moratorium and undertaking FMCT talks in good faith were in India's interest anyway.[315]

Opponents to an agreement had a similar perception of this issue to that of NPT pressures, with CTBT and FMCT commitments likely forming part of the Trojan horse complex of nuclear restrictions that India would unwittingly sign up to if it proceeded with an agreement.[316] For leftists, the agreement marked an Indian acceptance of these immoral and dangerous nuclear weapons legitimation regimes rather than a moral drive toward disarmament.[317]

The attitude score of 0.33 for articles citing this issue was the most pro-maximal in this discourse, highlighting the extent to which its appearance in the discourse was in support of maximalist nuclear policy opinions and those encouraging Indian defiance of these bulwarks of the NPT-based nonproliferation regime.

7.9 Conclusions

This episode formed a pivotal juncture in India's nuclear history. The sense of the historical magnitude of the prospect of India securing an agreement with the United States to lift sanctions in return for India dividing its nuclear estate into civilian and military networks, placing the former under international safeguards, was shown in the unprecedented volume of commentary in this discourse, standing at one hundred and sixty-six articles in this random sample. Many members of the discourse, including both supporters and opponents of an agreement, visibly believed that the future course of Indian foreign and security policy greatly hinged on the decision it took on this issue.

The drift of Indian nuclear discourse away from the overwhelming consensus in favour of nuclear restraint at the outset of our study, toward a rough balancing of pro-restraint and pro-maximalist opinions on Indian nuclear force preferences, entered a new stage here. The

[315] Editorial, "Deterring Pressure", Hindustan Times, April 18, 2006.

[316] "Reject Nuke Conditions: BJP".

[317] Bidwai, "Nuclear Deal at What Price?".

overall attitude score for this discourse was 0.07, the second most pro-maximalist score recorded yet, but also the closest score to the absolute centre of 0 on the restraint/maximalist spectrum. This highlighted the extent of growing dissensus on the future of the nuclear force that was becoming a new fixture of the discourse following the 2001-2 Parliament attacks episode. The polarisation index of 0.71 further underscored that this was a fairly polarised discourse.

Divisions continued to characterise the discourse at the binary for/against level of support for a nuclear agreement. 59% of the discourse supported an agreement, while 41% opposed it. Only at the level of policy options did we begin to get a clear picture of where support in the discourse lay.

Supporters of a nuclear agreement managed to virtually all unite into one cohesive policy option, with a common core of arguments. This option, which also included nearly all the centrist support in the discourse, supported the implementation of a nuclear agreement that would lift economic and technological sanctions upon India, place Indian civilian nuclear facilities under safeguards, and protect India's ability to continue nuclear force development. This policy option alone commanded the support of 58% of the discourse, including most of its centrist support. These two attributes – a status as the first or second most popular policy option, and with a robust base of centrist support – had marked the policy option that correlated with government decisions in each discourse, a pattern which continued in this discourse. While the government pathway in adopting this option was fraught with political difficulties, its eventual decision to implement a nuclear agreement and the shape the agreement took most closely resembled this policy option.

The other policy options opposing the agreement, by contrast, were a story of division. Opponents to an agreement moved into supporting one of three principal policy options: oppose a nuclear agreement; oppose a nuclear agreement and redirect India's nuclear trajectory toward disarmament; and oppose a nuclear agreement and demand that Indian sanctions be lifted merely by international recognition of India's attributes as a rising power. As well as presenting a divided view to policymakers, each of these policy options largely lacked centrist support, and mainly consisted of opponents to the policy agenda of the Congress-led Indian government from the BJP and Left Front political groupings. The fact that Option 2, to oppose a nuclear agreement, had no recommendation for how India would

alternatively lift the sanctions hindering its economic and technological prospects outside an agreement, further diminished the chances of the final government policy resembling its recommendation.

The hierarchy of influences reflected the extent to which this discourse primarily revolved around India's domestic needs and political identity, and the impact of an agreement upon these. All contributors agreed that India's decision on this issue would alter its foreign and security policy and the nature of its rise in the world. Different preferences for India's future trajectory underlay each of the four principal influences: American Pressures, Economic and Developmental Needs, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, and Domestic Partisan Politics. The topics represented by these influences, illuminating the wide-ranging aegis of this discourse and sense of importance for India's future, were: the benefits and costs of a nuclear agreement with the United States for India's foreign and security policy, and whether a closer relationship with the United States was desirable; the economic, energy and technological gains that would accrue from an agreement, and whether these could be obtained without one; the ability of India to still develop a credible nuclear force under an agreement; and the fierce domestic political divisions and parliamentary manoeuvring that would affect India's decision.

The principal framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements here was by opponents of an agreement with a maximalist reading that no barriers, real or hypothetical, could be imposed on Indian nuclear force development capabilities. The appetite for restraint in the presentation of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in the 1997-8 overt nuclear deterrence and 1998-99 nuclear doctrine discourses was clearly being replaced with a more maximalist view built around this prioritisation of nuclear force development flexibility. The tendency for this issue to be prominently cited as a main influence in strategic discourse, and to be enlisted more in support of maximalist policy arguments, was therefore further confirmed in this discourse.

Of the top four most cited influences in this discourse, the most popular – American Influences – was external and one of the domestic influences, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, had been primarily cited in previous studies by pro-maximalist arguments. The other two influences, Economic and Developmental Needs and Domestic Partisan Politics, were domestic in nature and had traditionally been cited in support of pro-restraint

arguments. This reflects the overall centrist attitude score of this discourse, and again underlines the replacement of strong pro-restraint majorities of opinion leading up to the 2001-2 Parliament attacks episode with a rough balancing between pro-restraint and pro-maximal supporters afterward. In this context, where the centrist opinion lay in the discourse gained elevated importance in explaining the pattern of correlation of a policy option to the government decision. This was underlined by the strongly centrist credentials of the successful policy option in this episode.

Chapter 8: Decision: 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis

8.1 Introduction

The last major flashpoint in India's rivalry with Pakistan had been the 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis. As analysed in our study, the discourse on that crisis had been notably different than that of the 1999 Kargil war. There was a much greater appetite for limited conventional strikes upon Pakistan in the Parliament attacks crisis regardless of the inherent escalatory risks of these in a nuclear environment, and an overall higher degree of Indian public anger and frustration. This was crystallised in frequent calls that Indian policy be seen to visibly punish Pakistan with greater costs than it had faced in Kargil.

This Parliament attacks discourse had indeed marked a turning point in our study. Up until this crisis, policy discourses had regularly demonstrated a substantial and stable consensus in favour of nuclear restraint. However, starting from the Parliament attacks episode, this consensus was replaced by growing support for maximalist nuclear force policy. This support gradually gained ground over the course of subsequent policy decisions, to the extent that the most recent decision on the civil nuclear agreement had featured a discourse roughly divided between maximalist and pro-restraint opinion, and an average attitude score slightly on the maximalist side of the spectrum.

As a Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack on the Indian parliament had wrought such changes on Indian nuclear discourse and cultivated maximalist nuclear policy sentiments, this raised the question of what effects the next terrorist attack on India would bring in terms of discourse and policy responses. This was all the more pertinent given that many of the core underlying political and military issues within the India-Pakistan rivalry had remained unchanged since the Parliament bombings. These included the uncertain status of Kashmir; the disputed Line of Control border between India and Pakistan; and continuing infiltration by Pakistan-sponsored terrorist groups into India.

A glimmer of hope appeared in 2008, with the downfall of Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil war and leader of Pakistan during the Parliament attacks crisis. His departure from office, followed by successful democratic presidential elections, opened a new pathway for

possible peace talks through a change in leadership. The new president, Asif Ali Zardari, took office in September 2008.

However, this window and these tentative hopes did not last long, and India soon found itself reeling from a new spectacular terrorist attack. On November 26, 2008, ten Pakistanis arrived on the shores of Mumbai in speedboats. They quickly split into four teams, with each team seeking famous landmarks and symbols of the city and then killing as many people as possible there. Targets included the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus central train station, the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower and Oberoi Trident hotels, and the Nariman House Jewish centre. Through gunfire and planting bombs for nearly sixty hours, the terrorists killed one hundred and sixty-six people before being stopped by Indian security forces. The Parliament attacks therefore paled in comparison to the ferocity and body count of this atrocity.[318]

Compounding the Indian public shock at this event was the fact that the terrorists had been allowed to continue their spree for so long due to an abysmal response from the Indian security forces. Mumbai police largely ignored a concerned initial report from Indian fishermen about the suspicious seaborne arrival of the terrorists in the city. Once the scale of the attack became clear, it took nine hours for a unit from India's counter-terrorist force, the National Security Guards, to arrive and deploy in Mumbai. A review article following the attack noted public anger at the *"poor state of our preparedness, antiquated and inadequate equipment, the lack of training – really, for not having systems in place."*[319]

This constituted an atrocity that appeared to overshadow even that of the Parliament attacks. The Indian shock and fury at this attack was also observed abroad. Sensing the Indian public mood, US senator John McCain referred to this attack as *"India's 9/11".*[320] With Pakistan-sponsored groups seemingly able to plan ever more spectacular and destructive terrorist attacks, despite the restraint India demonstrated in the Kargil war and political, military and economic pressure it assembled against Pakistan in response to the Parliament attacks, what could India do to finally ensure this was the last such strike on its soil? Given that the public

[318] International Institute of Strategic Studies staff, "Terror in Mumbai", IISS Strategic Comments Vol. 14 Issue 10 (December 2008) pp. 1-2.

[319] Harsh Sethi, "Backpage", Seminar Vol. 593 (January 2009).

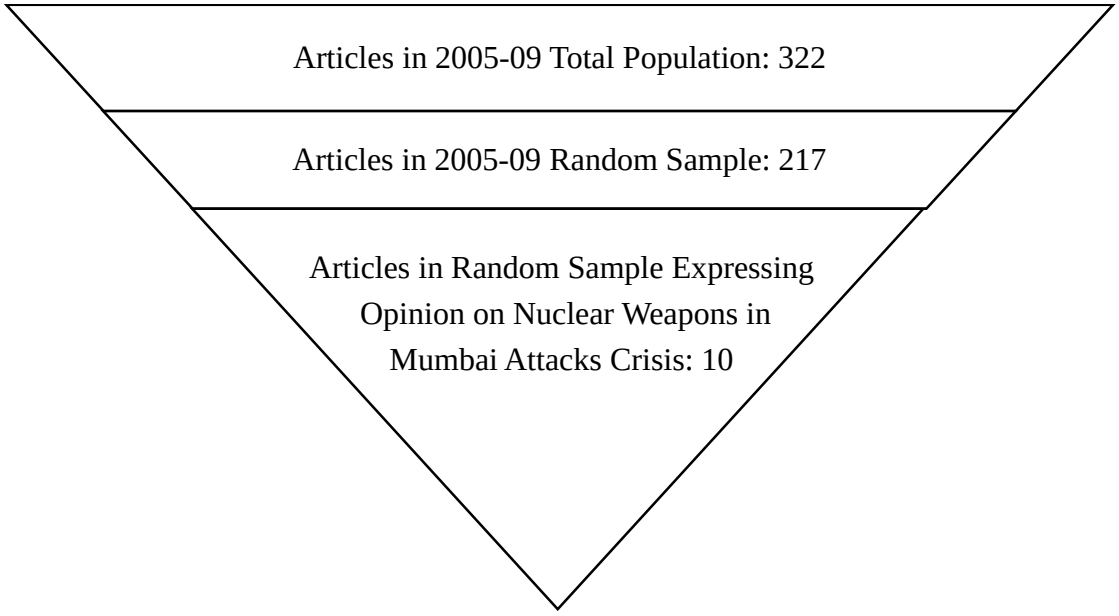
[320] Nirupama Subramanian, "McCain Warns Pakistan of Indian Air Strikes", The Hindu, December 7, 2008.

mood from Kargil to the Parliament attacks had evidenced greater support for conventional strikes against Pakistan and less commitment to the principle of nuclear restraint, how would the Indian discourse now respond to this episode?

8.2 Balance of Opinion on Strategic Discourse on 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Decision

Ten articles in the random sample expressed an opinion on nuclear weapons in connection with the Mumbai attacks.

Figure 25: Articles in Total Population, Random Sample and Expressing Opinion on Nuclear Weapons in Mumbai Attacks Crisis



Of these ten articles, all opposed the use of nuclear weapons as an Indian response. The low number of articles discussing nuclear policy in this episode reflects a similar condition to that of the Kargil war, in that most articles on this conflict did not discuss nuclear policies at all in considering possible responses.

8.3 Attitude Score

In line with the universal opposition among articles in this episode to the notion of using the bomb in any way in relation to this crisis, not one made a maximal nuclear policy argument here. The support of all articles that discussed nuclear policy for extreme nuclear restraint was reflected by the attitude score for this discourse of **-1**, at the absolute pro-restraint pole of the opinion spectrum. Given that every article held a -1 score, the absence of articles coded as '0' in this episode means there will be no second calculation of attitude scores or the polarisation index in this chapter. This point on the spectrum had last been reached in the Kargil war discourse. The willingness of several articles in the Parliament attacks discourse to suggest potential use of the Indian bomb should the crisis escalate, if not as a first response, accounts for the less pro-restraint score of -0.77 for that discourse.

Table 31: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.18**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.07**
7. 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**-1**

Table 32: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.66**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.8**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.2**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.14**
7. 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**-1**

8.4 Polarisation of Debate

The nuclear policy consensus in this debate, resembling that of the Kargil episode, was underlined by a polarisation index of **0** for this discourse. This represented an absolute consensus in favour of pro-restraint policies. A table summarising this index and previous indices is provided below.

Table 33: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions

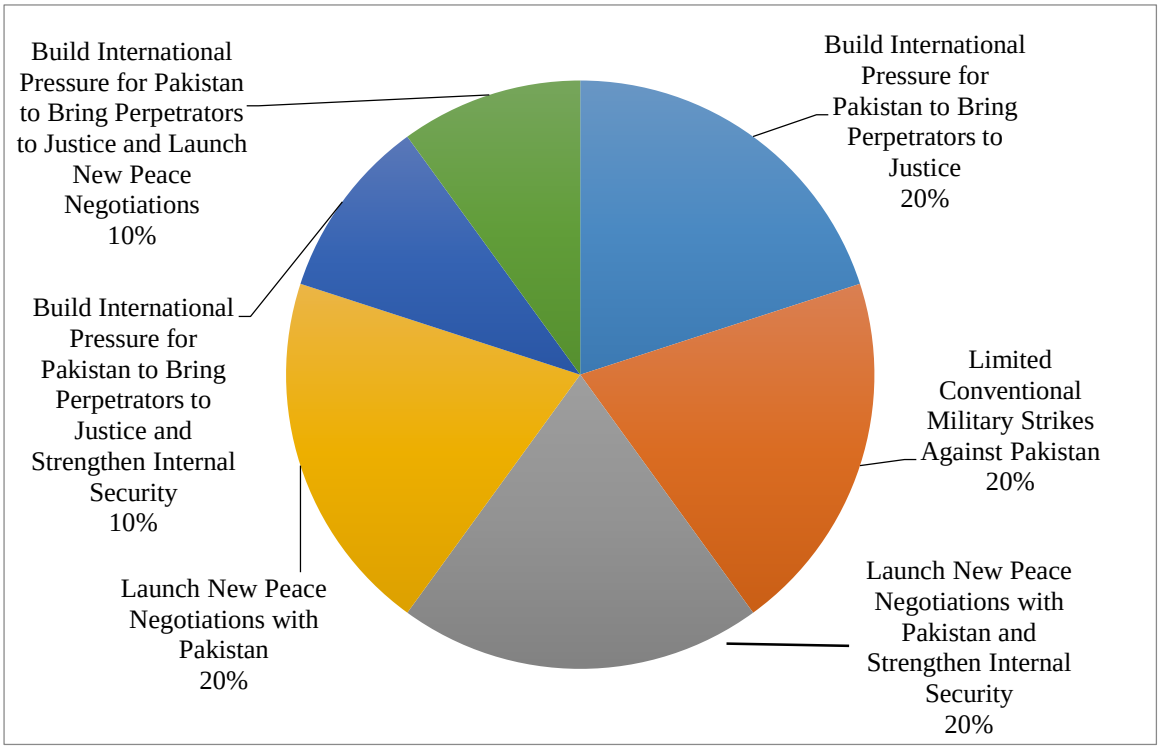
Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.74**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.62**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.95**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.71**
7. 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**0**

Table 34: Polarisation Indices for Discourses on Policy Decisions, Excluding Articles with '0' Coding

Policy Decision	***Polarisation Index (Score of 0 absolute consensus; score of 1 or above extreme polarisation)***
1. 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and New Nuclear Tests	**0.85**
2. 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.76**
3. 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**0**
4. 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**0.61**
5. 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**1.01**
6. 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.99**
7. 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**0**

8.5 Policy Options Promoted in Discourse

Figure 26: Policy Options Promoted in Discourse on 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis



Option 1: Build International Pressure for Pakistan to Bring Perpetrators to Justice (20%)

This option, in its focus on building overwhelming multilateral pressure on Pakistan, echoed the most popular policy option in the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse. However, where this previous policy option in the Parliament attacks had involved India placing military as well as diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan to compel future restraint, the option in this discourse advocated an entirely diplomatic response. Articles supporting this option argued that a combined political and military strategy of coercion had imposed sizeable fiscal costs upon India in the 2001-2 crisis, and brought India to the brink of major war for little foreseeable gain. Focusing on proving the culpability of Pakistan-sponsored groups for the attack, and obtaining international diplomatic support to ensure Pakistan acts to apprehend such groups, would be the most responsible approach for the long-term security of the region, as a leftist anti-nuclear critic advocated:

"Eventually, the gains could be modest but will probably contrast favourably with India's unproductive, expensive – costs estimated at Rs.7,000 to 10,000 crore – and high risk response to the Parliament House attack of December 2001, which led to a 10 month long eyeball to eyeball confrontation involving one million troops. This took the two countries to the brink of war at least twice, with the potential for escalation to the nuclear level. In the present case, India has no easy options. The task of pushing Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks to justice must be conducted with the utmost caution – without irreparably damaging the bilateral dialogue process or allowing a military buildup on the border or weakening Zardari's civilian government."[321]

This option was concerned with the potential of Indian military strikes to empower elements within Pakistan that were more hostile to long-term peace with India, such as the military and the terrorist groups who had conducted the attack, and undermine or topple the elected civilian administration as the more likely Pakistani partner for peace. This outcome would prove immensely counterproductive for Indian security, the columnist warned:

"Yet, it is clear that Pakistan must make such a clean break and execute a paradigm shift in policy if it is not itself to be devoured by extremism. How can India help facilitate such a break, and achieve its objective of strengthening the civilian government and building alliances with moderate elements in Pakistan, while isolating the extremists?"[322]

The government must therefore focus on international diplomacy to build multilateral pressure on Pakistan to deal with the terrorist groups operating from within its borders, but do so in a way that did not threaten the survival of the civilian government in Pakistan and with it the chances of a long-term peace. Indian attacks on Pakistani territory would likely mean the end of its elected government, and threaten the most disastrous outcomes in the nuclear region:

[321] Praful Bidwai, "Wisdom of Restraint", Frontline, January 2, 2009.

[322] Praful Bidwai, "Dealing with Pakistan", Frontline, January 30, 2009.

"If the Washington-based gamble fails, the UPA will again be tempted to use the military option – either overtly through strikes and dubious methods such as 'hot pursuit' or covertly by mounting secret operations against Pakistan from Afghanistan, where India has established a series of consulates.

This would be a disastrous course, which will launch India and Pakistan into an unending spiral of rivalry and cloak-and-dagger operations in which nothing is untouchable and no targets are excluded. This could in some respects be worse than, but a likely precursor to, open war, with its horrifying potential for a nuclear holocaust."[323]

This policy option was advocated by a leftist anti-nuclear *Frontline* columnist. This was the only policy option to lack centrist support, suggesting it would not form as credible a candidate as others for the eventual government policy taking its shape.

Option 2: Limited Conventional Military Strikes Against Pakistan (20%)

This option, suggesting that India conduct limited strikes against Pakistan to ensure it was appropriately punished for the attacks and thus restore deterrence, again resembled a recommendation from the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse. Where limited conventional strikes had been the third most popular option in that episode, it was joint second here. The same animating logic underpinned the option in this discourse: a belief that India enjoyed substantial room on the escalation ladder within which to attack Pakistan without reaching the level of nuclear alert; and a perception that Indian approaches of restraint toward Pakistan in previous crises had not sufficiently deterred it. In the opinion of a *Hindustan Times* editorial, India should attempt to build a multilateral coalition supportive of an Indian crossborder operation against Pakistan:

"…The world is increasingly sympathetic and, at least privately, accepts that the LeT is guilty. It also strongly believes that Islamabad needs to take action against the militants involved. If India plays its cards right, it will have a broad international

[323] Ibid.

acceptance that it is entitled to compensation, and, perhaps, the right of retaliation…."[324]

According to this editorial, the weak civilian government in Islamabad, and the real direction of much of Pakistan's foreign and security policy by its military, suggested that an entirely diplomatic approach by India toward Pakistan's civilian government would do little to stop further attacks. Facing this situation, India needed to take matters into its own hands in order to root out the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant group responsible for the attacks:

"With so little in the diplomatic kitty, more forceful options should be considered. A full-scale war is pointless in a nuclear environment. New Delhi needs to look harder at the idea of limited military action, perhaps striking only LeT camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Islamabad may well strike back. But, to be hard-nosed about things, the body count is less important than the need to send a message: as long as the Pakistani State tolerates terrorists within its border, it should expect to pay a price for the acts of such terrorists."[325]

This confidence in *"limited military action"* and India's ability to strike Pakistani territory without provoking substantial escalation was reflected in the second article in this category, by a retired Indian ambassador to Pakistan. This article featured a long discussion of his reading of Pakistan's nuclear red lines. This reading concluded that Islamabad would use nuclear weapons should it perceive that conventional means to safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity had failed, or as the Pakistani general responsible for the nuclear weapons programme had reportedly suggested, *"only when India's actions threaten Pakistan's very survival."*[326]

Given that a limited Indian conventional venture against Pakistan would not reach this level of conflict, there was therefore little for India to worry about in terms of nuclear red lines. India could therefore take this approach to ensure Pakistan would think twice about permitting terrorist groups to operate from this soil, as the article argued:

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[324] Editorial, "Dealing with the Neighbour", Hindustan Times, December 2, 2008.

[325] Ibid.

[326] G. Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat", Times of India, January 22, 2009.

"Given the present international environment and India's traditional restraint, any conflict that Pakistan initiates against India will necessarily be of a short duration. In such a scenario, it would not be possible for India to destroy Pakistan's armed forces substantially, which would result in Pakistan resorting to the use of nuclear weapons…India does, therefore, have substantial strategic space to act to safeguard its people and its territorial integrity."[327]

Authors in this opinion category consisted of a centrist newspaper editorial and a retired ambassador who advocated hawkish defence policies. The existence of this option suggested a resemblance of this discourse with that of the 2001-2 Parliament attacks episode. It also highlighted the new popularity of this thinking within the discourse, given a conventional crossborder strikes option had now ascended in popularity to be a joint first most popular policy option.

Option 3: Launch New Peace Negotiations with Pakistan and Strengthen Internal Security (20%)

Authors supporting this policy option had less confidence in the ability of India to safely launch conventional strikes upon Pakistan without grave consequences. They argued that this endeavour would prove destructive to the security of both India and Pakistan, and was not viable given their possession of nuclear weapons. More realistic and achievable measures to safeguard India security would instead be improving India's internal security apparatus, and, as difficult as it was to consider in the wake of such a horrific attack, launching new peace talks with Pakistan. As an *India Today* editorial advised:

"War cries are being heard but with two nuclearised nations that is hardly an option. War is only a means to end and the end can never be mutual destruction. I am reminded of a quote of my favourite speech, John F. Kennedy's inaugural address in which he said: 'So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate

[327] Ibid.

out of fear but never fear to negotiate.' Perhaps that is how we have to deal with Pakistan."[328]

A second article, by a leftist scholar, first addressed several prospective reasons for India to launch strikes upon Pakistan. These included the precedent of the American operations in Afghanistan and Iraq following the September 11 attacks, and the obvious continuing unwillingness of Islamabad to apprehend terrorist groups operating from Pakistan. The article noted that strikes would paradoxically strengthen the Pakistan military and these militant groups at the cost of the civilian leadership, and thus empower those elements within Pakistan most opposed to peace with India. The author then took direct aim at the line of thought in Option 2:

"The more sophisticated argument for war…suggests that the only way to bring international pressure to bear upon the Pakistani military is for India to flex its muscles and show that 'it means business'… The war option is also irresponsible and dangerous since the nuclear weaponisation that has occurred in both countries makes any such engagement unpredictable. So war is clearly not a solution."[329]

With any military option thus firmly ruled out, the article came to the same conclusion as the *India Today* editorial: the only measures left were strengthening India's domestic security capabilities, while rededicating the government toward peace talks:

"For sustainable peace in the subcontinent, we have to combine greater internal vigilance with a more positive and engaged approach with our neighbours since all of us suffer from similar problems of internally and externally generated violence."[330]

These articles both largely focused on repairing the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship, and did not suggest building an international coalition to pressure Pakistan as Option 1 did. However, they also recommended that the internal security apparatus, proven so woefully

[328] Aroon Purie, "Pledge to Win this War", India Today, December 15, 2008.

[329] Jayati Ghosh, "War and Peace", Frontline, January 16, 2009.

[330] Ibid.

lacking in the attack, be enhanced as an essential lesson of this crisis. The support of this policy option by a centrist newspaper editorial and a leftist commentator highlighted a degree of centrist support for this policy option, where the previous two had largely relied upon leftist and hawkish support bases.

Option 4: Launch New Peace Negotiations with Pakistan (20%)

The two articles in this category, an *India Today* correspondent and a centrist *Telegraph* columnist, both focused their suggested outcomes only on the need for new India-Pakistan peace talks. These two articles diverged from Option 3 in their comparative lack of recommendations regarding potential reform of the Indian internal security apparatus. Writing on the atmosphere inside Pakistan during the crisis, an *India Today* correspondent observed pessimism about the chances of war. Following a similar logical pattern to the arguments of Option 3, having noted that military strikes were unlikely and unsuitable in this context, the article concluded that this left a new peace talks drive as the only remaining option open to India:

> *"Pakistan's wargamers are also fairly sure that India would find even 'surgical strikes' as too risky, given their low utility against rudimentary camps and which could force Pakistan to answer with its own missiles. There is of course the danger of things spiralling out of control between nuclear neighbours…Unfortunately, what is needed to deny the Mumbai attackers an even more resounding victory is precisely what has become politically difficult for both India and Pakistan. And that is a more sincere commitment to the peace process."*[331]

The second article, by a *Telegraph* columnist, predicted destabilising consequences for India emanating from any attack on Pakistan. Use of nuclear weapons, the author argued, would still leave a fractured and much more dangerous region afterward for India to contend with. Covert Indian actions to encourage dissension within Pakistan would not benefit Indian security either, as the article argued in the format of an address to hawkish Indian proponents of military strikes:

[331] Hasan Zaidi, "Inside Pakistan, Fear Holds the Key", India Today, December 22, 2008.

"Something similar will happen even without nukes; if you help goad Pakistan into a civil war, it will be one that will make Sri Lanka look like a small scuffle at a picnic, and there is one chief direction in which the fall-out will spread, into this country you claim to love so much."[332]

The article further underlined a key point among articles opposing military strikes in this discourse: military operations would weaken the civilian elected government as the most likely supportive constituency for peace talks within Pakistan, and strengthen Pakistan's military forces and the militant groups hosted within its territory as the most formidable internal opponents of peace and source of the Mumbai attacks. Indian policy should seek to avoid any approach that could thus undermine the grip of Pakistan's civilian government over the state, as the article warned:

"In any case, the only target an Indian air-strike will hit is the limping civilian government in Islamabad, which, in turn, will please no end India's real enemies from Karachi to Kandahar."[333]

These articles, consisting of a correspondent and columnist for two different centrist newspapers, formed another centrist base of support. This demonstrated that there was not a clear filtering of centrist opinion into supporting one policy option, as had been a feature of previous discourses.

Option 5: Build International Pressure for Pakistan to Bring Perpetrators to Justice and Strengthen Internal Security (10%)

This option, authored by a retired foreign secretary who had served Congress governments, merged the recommendation of Option 1 - that India respond solely by diplomatic means to build international pressure on Pakistan to apprehend the responsible militant groups – with that of Option 3 – that India build its internal security capabilities to prevent the next attack.

[332] Ruchir Joshi, "Affording Enemies", Telegraph, February 15, 2009.

[333] Ibid.

This article shared the concern with most policy options that a conventional military strike on Pakistan would empower those forces within the country opposed to long-term peace with India – the military and the terrorist groups there which likely conducted the attack – and thus reduce the chances of peace. A conventional military strike would indeed play right into the hands of the terrorist perpetrators of the attack, as the author warned:

> *"There should be no doubt on both sides of the border that the terrorist attacks on India are equally directed at the political leadership in Pakistan, which is regarded as weak, corrupt and ineffective, and which had been making friendly approaches to India...Any strike on Pakistan will give the terrorists and their sponsors exactly the result they want, because an Indo-Pakistan conflict will divert the Pakistan forces from the antiterror campaign waged inside their own borders, and will give succour to the military and to the real enemies of both India and Pakistan."*[334]

Instead, India should focus on strengthening its domestic policing and interdiction capacities, while understanding that the new civilian government in Islamabad was fragile and could be swept away in the turmoil surrounding any Indian strike on Pakistan. Keeping this reality in mind would steer India toward the best response to the crisis:

> *"India should certainly not stand idly by: we should strengthen our domestic and foreign intelligence, our local policing, and keep our powder dry, because the worst-case scenario will be the breakdown of the State in Pakistan which will lead to extremism and adventurism with India as the main target."*[335]

The idea that if conventional military strikes were ruled out, Indian forces could still undertake covert measures within Pakistani territory to destabilise its military or the responsible groups, was also dismissed as unworkable. This still bore all the risks and costs posed by a conventional military campaign, including collapse of the civilian government in Pakistan and empowerment of its military and anti-India militant groups. There was no military solution, the author concluded:

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[334] Krishnan Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism", Telegraph, February 11, 2009.

[335] Ibid.

"The possession of nuclear weapons by proponent and opponent in South Asia is a strong prophylactic against all-out war…There has been talk also, with a nod and a wink, about covert action, presumably against Pakistani facilities. This is precisely the kind of non-attributable action from which India has suffered over many years from some of its neighbours. Such activities are universally condemned as deplorable...It would be hard, furthermore, to cite any example where covert activity sufficiently and positively advanced national interests."[336]

Option 6: Build International Pressure for Pakistan to Bring Perpetrators to Justice and Launch New Peace Negotiations (10%)

A former Indian foreign secretary, who had served under Congress governments, contributed the article that constituted this option. A combined effort, in collaboration with the UN Security Council and Pakistan government, to end the operation of terrorist groups in Pakistan through a combination of peaceful diplomatic pressure and dialogue was the approach recommended by this option. Any Indian military mobilisation would reduce the chances of constructive Pakistani movements to end the operation of these militant groups from its territory, and risk major war for no real gains. War as a policy measure was simply no longer available to India in nuclear South Asia, as the author advised:

"As far as war is concerned, irrespective of what some hawks may demand, war cannot be an option. When India became nuclear so did Pakistan and it came on par with us. We lost the advantage of our superiority in conventional warfare."[337]

However, this still left a substantial array of diplomatic policy measures with which to pursue against Pakistan. As this article argued, working with the UN Security Council and Pakistan to ensure that the latter arrested the perpetrators of the attacks would form the best means of ensuring a long-term change in India-Pakistan relations. Certain further international pressures could be applied that still did not involve military coercion, as the author continued:

[336] Ibid.

[337] Romesh Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results", Hindustan Times, January 4, 2009.

"Covert diplomatic pressures should be given more space. They are working and results, meagre as they may be, are emerging. However, if nothing happens in the near future, there are two lethal levers that would need to be applied. The first is the economic one. Even the apartheid regime in South Africa had to succumb to this. The second is the military one. Supplies of arms aid, spares and new military supplies might need to be suspended. There is, as such, no shortage of measures."[338]

In dealing with the immediate imperative of punishing the militant groups within Pakistan responsible for the attacks, the article recommended that India also take a broader view and see this incident as also a stimulant for a new peace drive. Without the irritant of the uncertain final status of the Line of Control and ownership of Kashmir, there would be no motivating rationale for Pakistan-based terrorist groups to exist. India should rededicate itself to resolving the root cause of tension with Pakistan that had ultimately birthed this attack, the author concluded:

"The time has now come to take some bold steps with respect to Kashmir. No magic solution can be found… We have come a long way in our confidence-building measures. Let the Line of Control become a border of peace and tranquillity. Let the people of Jammu and Kashmir interact with each other freely."[339]

8.6 Summary

This discourse demonstrated further transitions both from that of the Kargil and Parliament attack episodes, as the other crisis situations in our study in which the nuclear decision revolved around use or non-use. The attitude score of -1 for this discourse, an absolute consensus in favour of nuclear restraint, highlighted that this discourse universally agreed that any use of nuclear weapons should be decisively ruled out as an appropriate response to the Mumbai attacks. This bore a closer resemblance to the similarly adverse opinion on use of the bomb in the Kargil crisis, which held the same attitude score of -1, than to the Parliament attacks episode, with a less pro-restraint score of -0.77. The Parliament attacks crisis had

[338] Ibid.

[339] Ibid.

obtained this particular score, the only crisis episode in our study to not occupy the absolute pro-restraint pole on the spectrum, due to the tendency by some analysts in that discourse to refuse to rule out use of the bomb should that crisis escalate. This had also extended to occasionally emphasising India's nuclear force as a relevant, usable tool in that crisis, including promoting its destructive capabilities and readiness.

Despite the seeming greater resemblance of this discourse with that of Kargil than of the Parliament attacks, there was still a policy option in support of conventional military strikes upon Pakistani territory here. This had been present in the Parliament attacks discourse, and indeed formed a landmark in our study as a sign of the increasing Indian frustration with Pakistan eroding support for nuclear restraint in the discourse. In this Mumbai attacks episode, there was not only a continued supportive constituency for military strikes, but one that had now risen to the status of joint first most popular option. This formed an ominous development for India-Pakistan relations, given the obvious importance of numerical popularity for a recommended policy option in the discourse to successfully shape government policy in past episodes.

Therefore, this discourse appeared at first sight to be a return to the overwhelming pro-restraint consensus of the early years of our study, seen in the 1997-8 nuclear tests, 1998-9 nuclear doctrine, and 1999 Kargil war episodes. However, at the level of policy options it demonstrated a certain continuation with the hawkishness, public anger, and confidence in Indian control of the military escalation ladder in a nuclear environment that animated the Parliament bombings discourse.

8.7 Selecting an Option

Despite the continuation of a military strikes option from the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse into this Mumbai attacks debate, it should be noted that this discourse was overall still more pro-restraint than the 2001-2 discourse. Where in the 2001-2 discourse a military strikes option had been part of a majority of policy options in the discourse supporting measures that would deliberately escalate the conflict in a nuclear environment, here the strikes option was the only escalatory policy option, and now accounted for only 20% of the discourse. The greater overall support for restraint here was further highlighted by the attitude

score of -1 for this discourse, compared to -0.769 for the Parliament attacks discourse. The complete refusal of authors in this discourse to consider nuclear use in any circumstance differentiated it from the Parliament attacks discourse.

However, based upon the common attributes of policy options in the past that eventually correlated with government policy – the option enjoying the position as most popular or second most popular in terms of numerical support, which then also included a substantial degree of centrist political support – there was a far more competitive array of policy options here than in previous discourses. There was a more even division of support for policy options across the discourse, with four options sharing the status of joint most popular and two ranking as joint second most popular. Furthermore, four out of the six options enjoyed centrist support, where in several previous discourses this political constituency had largely filtered into supporting one or two of several policy options.

The first option with the status as joint most popular, to build an international coalition to pressure Pakistan to bring the perpetrators to justice, would also help satisfy the pressure the Indian government faced following the attacks to take measures against Pakistan and the groups within its territory that were responsible. It would be politically difficult for the government to not adopt at least some measures of approbation against Pakistan. This option also specifically focused on diplomatic initiatives and ruled out raising military pressure, with supportive commentators repeatedly noting that a military approach had been tried and failed in the 2001-2 Parliament attacks episode. The recommendations of this option, that India seek international support to amplify diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to cooperate in apprehending the militant groups responsible, thus formed a politically appropriate response for the government to this crisis. However, this option was advocated by an anti-nuclear leftist commentator critical of much of the government's policy agenda, and was the only recommendation not to feature any centrist political support. This undermined its chances of correlating with the ultimate government policy.

The second, third and fourth options all enjoyed the same position of joint most popular in the discourse. The second option, for conventional strikes against Pakistan, shared similar assumptions with the first appearance of this hawkish thinking in the Parliament attacks discourse. These were a confidence that there existed substantial room on the escalation ladder for India to conduct almost consequence-free military strikes without fear of escalation

toward the nuclear level; and a perception that the Mumbai attacks proved that only an aggressive Indian response would change Pakistan's cost-benefit calculus so that these provocations stopped. However, military strikes were still an incredibly risky endeavour for the government to attempt, posing potential heavy costs to India's international image and regional security. The strikes would furthermore be conducted against a new civilian-led government in Islamabad which New Delhi had previously seen as holding potential for peace talks. It should also be noted that this recommendation, as the only escalatory option in the discourse, only enjoyed the support of 20% of contributors, compared to the pro-escalation majority of the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse.

The third option, for new peace talks with Pakistan combined with reforms to strengthen Indian domestic security management, also posed political difficulties of a different form to the Indian government. The public anger and shock at the attacks meant that a government decision to hold out an olive branch to Pakistan as its first response would be highly unpopular. However, while this recommendation for India's foreign policy was therefore a difficult sell, the suggestion for its internal policy was more promising. The attacks had demonstrated huge flaws in the training, equipment, and coordination of India's domestic security forces, and bolstering India's internal security capabilities as a corrective measure would not risk regional security as military strikes would, nor be politically unpopular as early peace talks would.

The fourth option, for new peace talks as the sole Indian response, was the most unrealistic in this discourse, for the same reasons as its appearance as part of the third option. The fifth option appeared to hold more potential. This option formed a combination of Option 1 – that India respond solely by diplomatic means to build international pressure on Pakistan to apprehend the responsible militant groups – with that of Option 3 – that India build its internal security capabilities to prevent the next attack. This option was also supported by a retired foreign secretary, ensuring that it held the same centrist credentials as the others in this discourse. However, based upon the record from previous episodes in our study, its status as the least popular option would suggest pessimism regarding its likely success in being adopted as policy.

The sixth option combined the recommendation for improving internal security measures with the politically difficult wish for immediate peace talks. Due to the issues surrounding

launching peace talks with Pakistan as part of the government response to the horrific attacks, this option, like Options 3 and 4, appeared a more difficult prospect to be adopted as policy. Facing this crisis and this array of policy options, how did the government respond?

The approach that the government selected closely resembled Option 5. It launched an investigation to collate evidence proving the Pakistani nationality of the Mumbai assailants and the responsibility of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, headquartered in Pakistan, for the attacks. It handed a portfolio of this evidence to Pakistani authorities as well as the United States, Britain and China, urging Pakistan to take action and that the other states join India in diplomatic pressuring for this outcome now that the identity of the Pakistan-based perpetrators had been clearly established.[340] The Indian diplomatic mission to the United Nations also spoke before the Security Council in December 2008, identifying Lashkar-e-Taiba as the responsible group and calling for the Council to agree a global ban on the Jamaat-ud-Dawa charity that served as a front organisation for the group. Lashkar-e-Taiba had been previously banned as an entity by the Council following the Parliament attacks.[341]

The Security Council supported this initiative, proscribing Jamaat-ud-Dawa in December 2008.[342] Facing this growing multilateral pressure, Pakistan launched an operation to arrest prominent members of the group. India did not mobilise any military units during the crisis. This approach, as we can see, closely adhered to the recommendation of Option 5. This approach continued throughout the crisis, until the episode dissipated by March 2009 into being managed as another element of bilateral dialogue.[343]

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[340] "Chidambaram to Go to US with 26/11 Evidence", Times of India, January 4, 2009.

[341] *Statement by Mr. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts at the Security Council on December 9, 2008* (New York: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, 2008), available at https://www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/31404ind1518.pdf

[342] *Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee Adds Names of Four Individuals to Consolidated List, Amends Entries of Three Entities* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 2008), available at http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9527.doc.htm

[343] Ajmal Kasab, the sole surviving member of the on-the-ground Mumbai attacks group, was formally charged in an Indian court in late February 2009, indicating that his fate would be henceforth decided as a matter for the Indian legal system. The Pakistani government also made clear by this point that it would cooperate with India in investigating the attacks. With these developments, the Mumbai attacks episode receded as a nuclear policy concern for the Indian government by March 2009, and was no longer perceived as such by the discourse. See

The second part of India's response was to strengthen its domestic security forces. A bill was quickly introduced into the Indian parliament and passed in December 2008, which extended the powers of the domestic security forces to include: broadening the range of activities by an organisation that can trigger its proscription by the government on the basis of involvement in terrorism; the legal detention of suspects for six months without charge; and a stronger presumption against granting bail for individuals suspected of terrorism.[344] This effort resembled the recommendation for a focus on this area in Option 5. The government did not ally this measure with a simultaneous peace initiative toward Pakistan, as Options 3, 4 and 6 had recommended as the overall approach.

In this way, the policy the government selected resembled a policy option developed in the discourse. The two planks of its policy approach – a peaceful diplomatic outreach to other states to prove Pakistan's culpability for the attacks, in order to build pressure on Pakistan to apprehend the individuals and groups responsible operating from its territory; and strengthening internal security forces – were clearly represented within the recommendations developed by the discourse on the crisis.

This finding again underlines the relationship of discourse to policy, as hypothesised at the outset of this study: the government policy selected would correlate with one on the spectrum of policy options developed in response to the nuclear policy dilemma. This correlation could occur in the form of a policy option being adopted largely unchanged, as has been the regular occurrence in this study; or it could assume the form of the government combining aspects of several policy options.

In each episode of this study, the government policy has resembled either the first or second most popular policy option in the discourse, with a strong base of centrist support. This validates the hypothesis, and allows this study to claim that major Indian government nuclear

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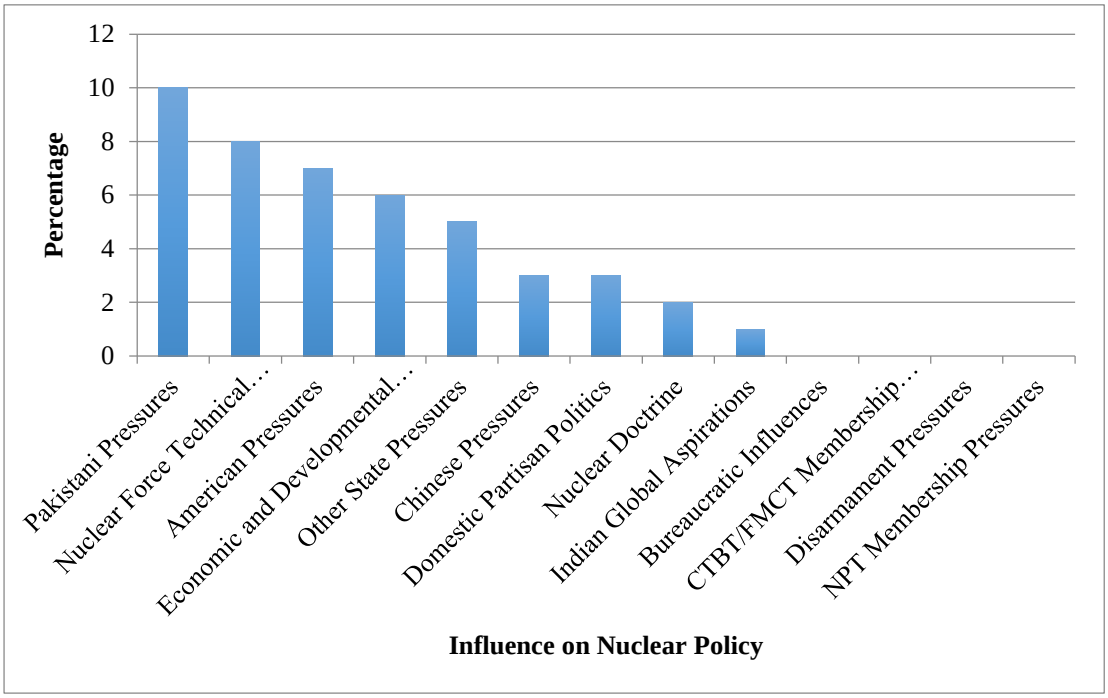
Sheela Bhatt, "26/11 Chargesheet Names Kasab, Lakhvi, 36 Others", Rediff, February 25, 2009; "India, Pak Foreign Secys Hold Talks", Indian Express, February 27, 2009.

[344] The text of the legislation passed by the Indian Parliament, the *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2008,* is available at http://164.100.24.219/BillsTexts/LSBillTexts/PassedBothHouses/unlawful%20-%20Houses.pdf. See also Sarah J. Watson and C. Christine Fair, "India's Stalled Internal Security Reforms", India Review Vol. 12 No. 4 (2003) p. 284.

decisions will tend to correlate with the first or second most popular policy option, which must hold a strong base of centrist support, in the surrounding nuclear discourse.

8.8 Issues Cited in Discourse on 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis

Figure 27: Issues Cited in Discourse on 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis



The influences in this discourse held similar positions to those in the Kargil and Parliament attacks episodes. The top two most salient issues, Pakistani Pressures and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, held the same ranking in this episode and that of the Kargil crisis. This reflects principal themes in the commentary on both crises: the intentions and future behavior of Pakistan; and what the possession of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan meant for possible Indian responses to the attacks.

However, a similarity with the Parliament attacks discourse was the ranking of American Pressures as one of the top four most cited influences, highlighting the importance within the discourse of lobbying the United States and ensuring that Washington supported India over Pakistan in their positions on the crisis. The importance of international outreach was further illustrated by Other State Pressures holding the position as fifth most cited influence.

Finally, Economic and Developmental Needs rose here to its highest position yet in the three episodes in this study focusing on a crisis situation, to fourth most cited issue. As this issue had traditionally been favoured by pro-restraint arguments, this highlighted the substantial support for a pro-restraint approach in this discourse.

Issue: Pakistani Pressures

Given this context, it is unsurprising that Pakistani Pressures was cited by every article in this episode. The attack bore the hallmarks of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-sponsored group responsible for the Parliament attacks. Apprehending the perpetrators of the attack would therefore involve Pakistan, and raise old questions regarding the degree of control or guidance of militant groups by Pakistan's military or other elements closer to the government. As noted at the start of this chapter, the core issues in the India-Pakistan rivalry had remained unresolved since the 1998 tests. The presentation of Pakistan by this discourse diverged into the same two principal framings of the Parliament attacks discourse, both responses to the same animus of anger and frustration at the geopolitical dilemma in which India again found itself due to activities conducted from Pakistan.

The most common framing, reflecting the greater support for some form of diplomatic pressure to work with the Pakistan government to apprehend the perpetrators than to conduct a military strike on its territory, was to wearily recognise that a military solution was simply unavailable, and peaceful diplomacy was the difficult, but only option open to India.[345] However, a less common framing was made by advocates of military strikes. For these authors, Pakistan had evidently not been deterred by the Indian responses to the Kargil and Parliament attacks crises, and a more militarily aggressive Indian initiative was now required to restore deterrence and raise the cost to Pakistan of permitting such provocations to be conducted from its territory. Limited strikes would not cause the Pakistani state to collapse overnight, nor threaten nuclear escalation.[346]

[345] Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results".

[346] Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat".

Nevertheless, this latter framing of Pakistan – that it was a deserving target in this context for Indian strikes, and that such measures would not spiral out of control for India – only held a minority of support in the discourse. The majority advocated a peaceful diplomatic process to work with the Pakistan government to apprehend the perpetrators, with the government concurring in its response.

Issue: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

This option held fairly even levels of citation across the supporters of each policy option, with the exception of Option 6. The most common framing of this issue was largely similar to that in the Kargil war: the presence of nuclear forces in India and Pakistan rendered any thought of military action too dangerous to consider, and crossborder armed operations were now consigned to the pre-1998 history of their rivalry.[347]

This dominant framing demonstrated the substantial support for nuclear restraint in this context. No article in this discourse supported a maximalist nuclear policy or suggested that nuclear weapons be assigned a greater role than previously in responding to this particular crisis. Indeed, the only article that differed from this dominant perspective emphasised the perceived restraint that guided both the Indian and Pakistani nuclear forces as a reason to support limited Indian conventional strikes.[348]

While this issue had in the past been cited in support of pro-maximalist arguments, it here demonstrated the consensus in favour of nuclear restraint in this episode. The presentation of India's nuclear force capabilities here was as an irrelevance to solving this crisis, and their presence inherently ruling out any military action due to the more disastrous potential consequences of escalation.

This suggested a return to the perception of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements that had characterised the Kargil war discourse. Despite the seeming trend toward increasingly maximalist views of the meaning of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements for Indian

[347] Purie, "Pledge to Win this War".

[348] Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat".

nuclear policy starting from the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse, a pro-restraint perception of the fundamental military unusability of the bomb suddenly reappeared in force here. This suggests that nuclear restraint had a greater underlying resilience as an organisational value in Indian strategic discourse, despite its growing contestation by the maximalist organising value until this episode. Given that this episode had represented the major test of whether Indian restraint would continue to erode and maximalist sentiments continue to grow in this third crisis situation, the resurgence of pro-restraint opinion here highlighted its status as the dominant organising value in crisis episodes, and the view of the Indian nuclear force around which the majority of Indian nuclear discourse in crises was built.

Issue: American Pressures

This was the third most cited issue, and was mentioned by articles supporting every option except that for Option 4. This is because Option 4, which called solely for new peace talks with Pakistan, largely limited its focus to the state of the bilateral relationship with Pakistan. The framing of this topic in this episode suggested a transition both from its presentation in the Kargil and Parliament attacks discourses. The Kargil discourse had largely perceived the conflict as bilateral in nature, and greatly downplayed the relevance and potential role of the United States. The Parliament attacks discourse had recognised a larger role for the United States as an essential influence in the crisis. However, it presented Washington either as an important mediator to whom New Delhi should appeal or as a potential enabler of Indian military strikes, due to its perceived ability to intervene to halt escalation and the precedent of its Afghanistan intervention following its own terror strike.

The perception that the United States would have a large influence on this crisis continued in this discourse from the Parliament attacks episode, but there was less consensus here on the most beneficial way for India that Washington should be involved. These framings of the United States divided into three main strands of opinion: India should limit as far as possible the role of the United States in this crisis; India should closely involve the United States as an essential element of applying diplomatic pressure on Pakistan; and merely recommending that New Delhi consider likely American responses in planning its response.

Articles arguing that India should avoid as far as possible bringing the United States into this crisis supported Option 1 – to build international diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan to bring the attack perpetrators to justice – and Option 3 – to build internal security while launching new peace talks with Pakistan.[349] The support of this view by arguments supporting Option 1 may appear paradoxical, but these articles were arguing for reaching out to the UN and UN Security Council as collective entities as the alternative to merely lobbying Washington by itself.[350]

By way of contrast, the second framing of the United States was to call for New Delhi to give it a greater role in solving the crisis. This presentation was made by a retired Indian foreign secretary who supported Option 6, for international diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan plus new peace talks. Washington had an effective relationship with Islamabad plus the power to compel it to apprehend the perpetrators, this argument went, and should be fully encouraged to assist New Delhi in this task.[351]

The third framing was to recognise that the United States was an important background actor and general factor for New Delhi to consider in planning a response to the crisis, but disagree on the specific nature of its influence and how it should be involved. A *Hindustan Times* editorial supportive of military strikes warned policymakers that the timing of this crisis in the twilight of the Bush administration meant that US support might not be as immediately forthcoming as in 2002.[352] A second article recommending strikes noted the reported American plans to seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons in the event of major Pakistani internal unrest as another reason for Pakistani nuclear restraint in the event of a limited Indian conventional strike.[353] A third view was to warn against hawkish thinking, asserting that India was not Israel and could not conduct ambitious conventional operations as it did not enjoy the diplomatic support from America that Israel did.[354]

[349] Bidwai, "Wisdom of Restraint"; Ghosh, "War and Peace"; Bidwai, "Dealing with Pakistan".

[350] Bidwai, "Wisdom of Restraint".

[351] Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results".

[352] Editorial, "Dealing with the Neighbour".

[353] Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat".

[354] Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism".

There was therefore substantial agreement in this discourse that the United States was a large influence in the region, and that New Delhi must plan for how it intended to control the involvement of Washington in the crisis. However, there was less overall clarity on how India should do so and to what end.

Issue: Economic and Developmental Needs

This issue has normally been cited in previous episodes in support of pro-restraint arguments, and this pattern was reconfirmed in this episode. There was only one framing of this issue, and again a familiar one from past crisis episodes: any Indian escalatory policy in this crisis risked enormous costs to India's economic and development prospects, and should be resisted on these terms.[355] The government should thus prioritise efforts to improve the security and economic prospects of Indian citizens, rather than worsen these conditions through attacking Pakistan.[356]

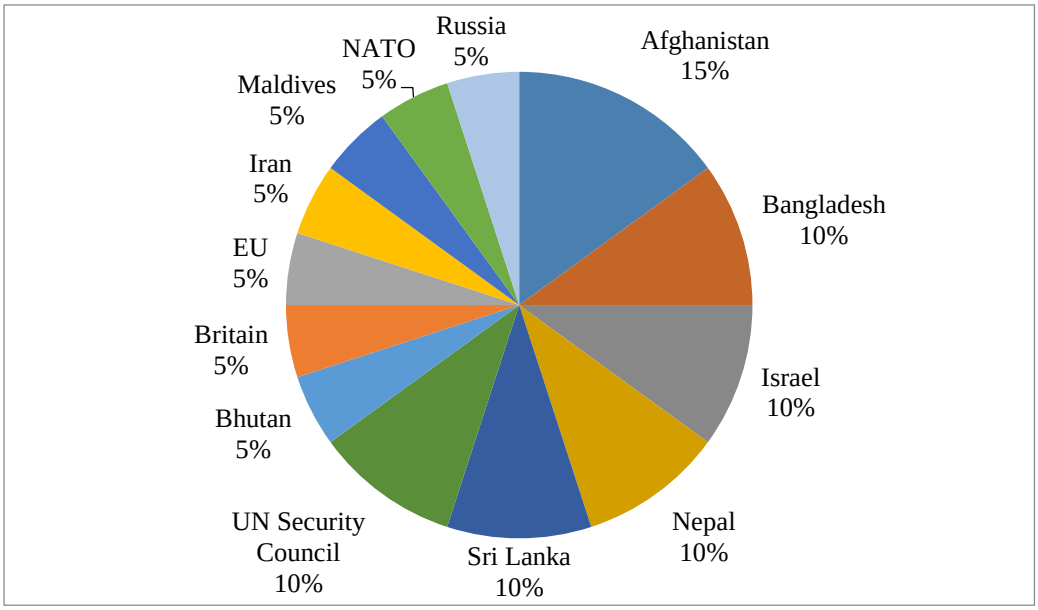
This issue was cited by articles supporting all policy options except Option 2 – for military strikes. It is unsurprising that authors calling for military strikes would not wish to dwell on a concern that would undermine their case.

[355] Purie, "Pledge to Win this War".

[356] Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism".

Issue: Other State Pressures

Figure 28: Additional States Cited as Influences in Discourse on 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis



Afghanistan was the most cited state outside the major three of the United States, China and Pakistan, demonstrating the continued relevance of the American and NATO operation there and resident Western forces for considering measures to take against Pakistan in response for the attacks. Afghanistan was cited three times, mostly in the context of recognising the war there in terms of pre-existing defence pressures upon Islamabad, and suggesting that the Pakistani state would be unable to withstand any Indian strike.[357] Another article, by an anti-nuclear commentator, made the same point but then extended this to warn against India involving itself in Afghanistan in direct conflict with those same groups.[358] The presentation of Afghanistan solely in support of pro-restraint arguments differs from that of the Parliament attacks discourse, in which it was cited to support escalatory arguments. This highlights again the decreased, although not entirely absent, appetite for escalatory measures against Pakistan in this episode compared to that of the Parliament attacks.

[357] Zaidi, "Inside Pakistan, Fear Holds the Key"; Bidwai, "Wisdom of Restraint"; Joshi, "Affording Enemies".

[358] Bidwai, "Wisdom of Restraint".

Israel was cited to warn readers against imagining that its response to Palestinian provocations could form a useful precedent for Indian behaviour toward Pakistan.[359] The other states mentioned here were largely in two groupings in order to make two principal points: the grouping of Britain, the European Union, Russia and the UN Security Council as states or institutions that India should lobby to adopt diplomatic pressure against Pakistan to apprehend the Mumbai attack perpetrators; and a second grouping of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal to emphasise the need for regional peaceful relations and the broader regional consequences that would issue from any India-Pakistan conflict.[360] Other State Pressures was cited by all policy options except for Option 2, supporting military strikes, due to the bilateral focus of Option 2 on the India-Pakistan rivalry.

Issue: Chinese Pressures

Similar to its presentation in the two previous crisis episodes, China was relegated to largely a background role in this discourse, obtaining the same number of citations as that of Afghanistan. Two authors suggested that India could attempt to reach out to China as a potential additional member for its coalition of states diplomatically pressuring Pakistan to arrest the individuals and groups responsible for the attack.[361] However, these suggestions admitted that the extent of Chinese pressure on Pakistan would likely be minimal, given the close China-Pakistan strategic relationship.[362]

The second framing, by a former Indian ambassador to Pakistan supportive of military strikes, was merely to point out the existence of this Sino-Pakistani strategic relationship, including Chinese proliferation to Pakistan as a key to its nuclear force development, as part of a brief comparative nuclear history of India and Pakistan. The article also detailed China as a principal target of India's nuclear force.[363]

[359] Bidwai, "Dealing with Pakistan".

[360] Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results"; Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism".

[361] Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results"; Bidwai, "Dealing with Pakistan".

[362] Bhandhari, "Covert Diplomacy, Overt Results".

[363] Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat".

These presentations of China thus overall demonstrated its largely background role in this crisis, almost relegated to one of the supporting cast of states alongside Bhutan. This tendency had also occurred in the Kargil and Parliament attacks discourse, with their international focus limited to largely that of the bilateral India-Pakistan relationship. The only prominent exemption to this tendency appeared to be the rising prominence of the United States, which continued in this episode from the Parliament attacks crisis.

Issue: Domestic Partisan Politics

This issue was cited by three articles. Similar to the balance of the previous influence, two authors shared one interpretation of the issue and a third offered a different view. The majority framing was to discuss the possible partisan advantages and disadvantages of a strike for the Indian government, with elections scheduled soon after the Mumbai attacks in spring 2009.[364] However, an *India Today* editorial instead bemoaned the quality of Indian governance and parliamentary politics that had contributed to the attacks being possible, and argued that a new approach to governance was needed.[365]

With elections on the near horizon, it is surprising that this element of navigating the crisis was not given more attention in the discourse. This is also notable given that this issue in general played a prominent role in the Kargil and Parliament attacks episodes.

Issue: Nuclear Doctrine

The widespread agreement across the discourse that nuclear weapons must not be used is reflected by the decline of Nuclear Doctrine as an influence from fourth most cited in the Kargil discourse, to joint sixth most cited in the Parliament attacks episode, to now seventh in this discourse. As authors repeatedly ruled out the use of nuclear weapons in any circumstance, they evidently felt it irrelevant to delve into doctrinal questions of nuclear use and command guidelines in discussing their preferred responses to the Mumbai attacks. Only

[364] Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism"; Joshi, "Affording Enemies".

[365] Purie, "Pledge to Win this War".

two articles thus cited this issue. One, by a retired Indian ambassador who supported military strikes, highlighted this issue to argue that the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan both viewed their nuclear forces as a last-resort option, and a limited Indian conventional campaign within Pakistan would thus not risk nuclear war.[366] However, this was countered by a former Indian foreign secretary, who argued that this was too risky an assumption upon which to build plans.[367]

Despite the fact that the Kargil discourse held a similar strong consensus against the use of nuclear weapons as this episode, authors in that discourse cited Nuclear Doctrine in greater volumes to make the point of the restraint measures in Indian nuclear policy rendering use of the bomb unthinkable. Here, this return to consensus against the use of nuclear weapons was communicated here instead by the limited citations of Nuclear Doctrine, demonstrating the low relevance of this entire issue to this particular crisis.

Issue: Indian Global Aspirations

This issue was only cited once, by a retired Indian foreign secretary. It was cited in the form of emphasising the costs to India's regional and international standing of any move toward military strikes. The burgeoning democratic developments within South Asia, which were of great benefit to India, and India's success in distancing itself politically from Pakistan in the eyes of world powers, would be gravely threatened by any war with Pakistan as an outcome of the crisis. Facing these unacceptable risks, the article argued, New Delhi should instead devote its energies to peaceful diplomacy with world powers to pressure Pakistan to deal with militant groups operating from its territory, while building India's internal security capabilities.[368]

[366] Parthasarathy, "An Empty Threat".

[367] Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism".

[368] Srinivasan, "From Rhetoric to Realism".

Not Cited: Bureaucratic Influences, CTBT/FMCT Membership Pressures, Disarmament Pressures, NPT Membership Pressures

These four remaining issues were not cited in this discourse. Given that this episode concerned potential Indian responses to a terrorist attack, issues concerning its adherence to nuclear nonproliferation arrangements or commitments (encompassing the CTBT/FMCT Membership Pressures, Disarmament Pressures and NPT Membership Pressures issues) were unlikely to be perceived as particularly relevant in this discourse.

The Bureaucratic Influences issue, covering the activities and intentions of the nuclear scientific complex, would likely have obtained more attention in this discourse had India's nuclear force been framed as more relevant to solving this problem and different options involving it been discussed. While Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was the second most cited issue in this discourse, we have seen that it was mentioned largely to demonstrate that major war, and for the majority of articles any Indian conventional military operation of even a limited scale, was not a credible option given the possession of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan.

8.9 Conclusions

This crisis formed another landmark in the progress of Indian nuclear thought. The Parliament attacks crisis had led to the largest shift of nuclear strategic discourse in our study, including the start of a progressive erosion of the pre-existing pro-restraint consensus, and a new appetite for conventional military strikes upon Pakistan regardless of the escalation risks in their nuclear rivalry. That these shifts had occurred in one crisis episode, and appeared to now be normal conditions of the discourse in the episodes following it, raised questions about how Indian strategic discourse, and the following government policy, might respond to the next crisis. Would the direction of movement away from the pro-restraint pole of the spectrum continue, to the extent that the attitude score would be firmly in the maximalist end of the opinion spectrum?

This crisis instead brought a different outcome: a return to the pro-restraint consensus, reflected by an attitude score of -1, of the Kargil discourse. Not one analyst suggested that

nuclear weapons could be used at all in this discourse. This consensus was a key aspect of the Kargil discourse but not that of the Parliament attacks, which featured some commentators discussing potential use of nuclear weapons if the crisis escalated. The overall sense in the Kargil war that Indian nuclear weapons were useable only as a last resort, which had eroded somewhat in the Parliament attacks discourse, was therefore restored in this episode.

However, the policy options offered in this discourse bore some similarities with that of the Parliament attacks. Where the policy options of the Kargil discourse had focused entirely upon defensive, limited eviction of Pakistani forces back across the border, this episode and that of the Parliament attacks instead evidenced a desire for Indian conventional military action within Pakistan. This bore significant escalatory and nuclear risks, but these were dismissed as irrelevant or unlikely by proponents of strikes. A dangerous development from the Parliament attacks discourse, this episode now found a military strikes option rising to the position of joint first most popular. While therefore this episode could hold a -1 attitude score due to the consensus of its contributors that India should not use nuclear weapons in any circumstance, it still evidenced some of the escalatory appetite of the Parliament attacks discourse; a path that could lead to major war and even nuclear conflict if followed.

Based upon the common features of policy options that correlated with eventual government policy in the past – the option enjoying the position as most popular or second most popular in terms of numerical support, which then also included a substantial degree of centrist political support – there was a far more competitive array of policy options here than in previous discourses. There was a more even division of support for policy options across the discourse, with four options sharing the status of joint most popular and two ranking as joint second most popular. Furthermore, four out of the six options enjoyed centrist support, where in several previous discourses this political constituency had largely filtered into supporting one or two of several policy options.

Three of these policy options suggested that India should respond to this mass atrocity with an olive branch to Pakistan, and launch new peace talks. This would form probably the most politically difficult policy for the Indian government to adopt amidst the public anger that followed the attacks, rendering these options unlikely to be implemented by government as policy. Another option, for India to launch a peaceful diplomatic campaign to persuade other states to pressure Pakistan to apprehend the perpetrators of the Mumbai attack, appeared to be

more politically suitable. However, this specific option was articulated by a leftist critic of the government, and was the only one without centrist political support, lessening its chances of adoption by government.

This left two options in the discourse: to conduct limited military strikes upon Pakistan; and for New Delhi to peacefully campaign for diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan to apprehend the responsible militant groups, combined with reforms to strengthen its internal security capabilities. Military strikes would have posed immense escalatory and reputational risks for the government. The option remaining, for diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan and internal security reforms, was that selected by the government.

In selecting again one of either the first or second most popular options in the discourse, this outcome again confirms the hypothesis of our study: that the government policy selected would exist on the spectrum of policy options developed by Indian strategic discourse in response to the nuclear policy dilemma. Indeed, in each episode of our study, the government policy has resembled either the first or second most popular policy option in the discourse, with a strong base of centrist support.

The top four most cited influences in this discourse were similar to that of the Kargil and Parliament attacks episodes. The top two issues in this episode, Pakistani Pressures and Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, were the same as those of the Kargil crisis. The main framing of both these issues reflected the substantial pro-restraint consensus within this discourse. The majority of citations of Pakistan wearily admitted the continuing frustration with Pakistan's activities but recognised that peaceful diplomacy was the difficult, but only option open to India. Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was largely cited to argue that the post-1998 overt possession of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan was a further reason to rule out any military action against Pakistan and instead focus on diplomatic measures.

Indeed, this dominant framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements demonstrated the substantial support for nuclear restraint in this context. While this issue had in the past been cited in support of pro-maximalist arguments, it here demonstrated the consensus in favour of nuclear restraint in this episode. The presentation of India's nuclear force capabilities here was as an irrelevance to solving this crisis, with their presence inherently ruling out any military action due to the more disastrous potential consequences of escalation.

This suggested a return to the perception of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements that had characterised the Kargil war discourse. Despite the seeming trend toward increasingly maximalist views of the meaning of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements for Indian nuclear policy starting from the 2001-2 Parliament attacks discourse, a pro-restraint perception of the fundamental military unuseability of the bomb suddenly reappeared in force here. This suggests that nuclear restraint had a greater underlying resilience as an organisational value in Indian strategic discourse, despite its growing contestation by the maximalist organising value until this episode.

American Pressures was the third most cited influence, highlighting a similarity with the Parliament attacks discourse in signaling that analysts perceived the influence of Washington as a central factor in how the crisis would be resolved. However, there was an interesting dissensus in the framing of the United States in this context, with analysts overall uncertain as to whether New Delhi should invite Washington to play a prominent diplomatic role in resolving the crisis, or whether this move would reduce Indian foreign policy flexibility. All analysts here agreed at a minimum that Washington would have relevance to this crisis and that New Delhi should plan for how to manage its involvement. A sign of the increased support for restraint in this discourse was the absence of framing of the United States in terms of its post-2001 military presence in the region as an enabler for bold Indian strikes against Pakistan.

The fourth most cited issue, Economic and Developmental Needs, ascended here to its highest position yet in the three episodes in this study focusing on a crisis situation. This issue had traditionally been favoured by pro-restraint arguments and here emphasised the grave economic costs of any escalatory Indian actions. This feature again highlighted the overall substantial support for a pro-restraint approach in this discourse.

This episode therefore evidenced an Indian commitment to nuclear restraint that was not as absolute as in the Kargil discourse, but not as weak as that in the Parliament attacks discourse. Similar to the Kargil episode, the government selected a non-escalatory policy option, here focused upon peaceful diplomacy to persuade Pakistan to apprehend the militants responsible for the attack while improving its internal security capabilities. While still remained a certain appetite for military action against Pakistan in this discourse, this episode therefore overall showed several unexpected resurgences in support for nuclear

restraint. This suggested that nuclear restraint as an organising value had a greater resilience in Indian nuclear thought, at least in crisis situations, than was anticipated by our study following the trends leading from the Parliament attacks episode.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study has traversed a dramatic and challenging period in Indian nuclear development, and more broadly in the story of India's rise as a growing international power. India's nuclear force in 1997, at the outset of this study, existed as an "option" that could be operationalised or dismantled, with India occupying a status of "nuclear opacity", somewhere between the statuses of declared nuclear weapons state and non-nuclear weapons state. By the end of this period, in 2009, India had conducted five nuclear tests, issued two nuclear doctrines, faced three major international security crises, and implemented an agreement with the United States that restructured its nuclear programme. The scale of changes to India's nuclear policy over this period, and the speed at which one major nuclear decision followed another, is indeed remarkable.

This study has sought to reconstruct the strategic discourse surrounding each of these nuclear decisions; distill the essential views and policy choices as developed in the discourse shaping Indian nuclear perceptions; and analyse whether this discourse correlated with the government policy in each episode. As well as providing a history of this momentous period in Indian nuclear history, then, the study has aimed to develop a methodology for testing a hypothesis that strategic discourse has an input in the policymaking process.

The findings of this study constitute a unique contribution to literature on Indian nuclear history, defence policymaking, strategic culture, and discourse analysis. The outcomes of this research most directly contest the thesis of Tanham, that India simply has no strategic culture. Indian foreign and security policy merely consisted of entirely ad-hoc, short-term and poorly conceived reactions to external shocks, Tanham held, with no strategic thinking or discernable conceptions of the appropriate use of force underlying these. We have instead seen that India possesses a nuclear strategic culture, primarily characterised by the organising value of nuclear restraint.

However, this organising value is more pronounced in security crisis discourses and is coming under progressively strong contestation by an alternative organising value of nuclear

maximalism in peacetime doctrinal nuclear policy discourses. In each episode of our study, we have indeed seen a vibrant debate unfolding on prospective nuclear choices for India, with contributors to the discourse issuing well-informed and strongly argued opinions in support of a range of proposed Indian nuclear policy options.

In each episode, the government then demonstrated the policymaking input of this discourse, selecting one of its proposed options as policy. This validates the hypotheses of this study: India has a strategic culture; strategic culture is generated by strategic discourse, which receives material and ideational inputs and formulates strategic views on the appropriate use of force based upon these; and strategic culture provides one among many inputs into the policymaking process.

These findings have substantial implications for the study of Indian defence and nuclear policy, strategic culture and discourse analysis. This concluding section will now look in more detail at the outcomes of this study as they related to its three guiding research questions. These have been:

I. Does Indian nuclear strategic culture, as produced by strategic discourse, serve as the main framer of nuclear force policy choices faced by India's leaders?
II. Does dominant opinion in Indian nuclear strategic discourse correlate to nuclear force policymaking?
III. Are the new nuclear capabilities available to India following the 1998 tests encouraging a reconsideration of India's nuclear posture and doctrine in strategic discourse?

Following this analysis of each research question, the study will then conclude with a broader examination of the relevance of this study for subsequent research on India, defence policymaking, and discourse analysis, as well as the nuclear dilemmas it presents for India to consider.

9.2 Research Question I: Does Indian Nuclear Strategic Culture, as Produced by Strategic Discourse, Serve as the Main Framer of Nuclear Policy Choices Faced by India's Leaders?

The hypothesis for this research question was that Indian nuclear strategic culture, as generated by strategic discourse, generates nuclear policy options that correlate with eventual government policy. To answer this question, the study reconstructed the discourse and spectrum of policy options developed by the discourse to address seven specific nuclear policy decisions. The hypothesis would be supported if the nuclear policies selected by government repeatedly existed as one of the policy options, or a combination of more than one policy option, as produced by the strategic discourse concerning those topics. It would be undermined by repeated instances of the government policy having no visible correlation with the policy options developed by the discourse. This would suggest that strategic culture did not have this policymaking input. This study therefore sought to test the assumption, as described by Tellis, that *"elite opinion…defines the range of preferred choices"* for policymakers regarding nuclear policy. [369]

This study has provided a clear affirmative answer to this question. In each episode, the government policy always existed on the spectrum of policy options developed by the discourse to address that nuclear issue. The generation, reconsideration and regeneration of concepts and perceptions in the discourse, which produced often unique sets of policy options, nevertheless had an input in official decisionmaking by one of those policy options always correlating with government policy.

This finding contests the thesis that India does not have a strategic culture, as we could see clearly here an expansive, vibrant strategic discourse on each nuclear policy topic that then correlated with the ultimate policy decision. Sophisticated readings of nuclear deterrence, escalation ladders, and regional security, among other topics, permeated each episode. As discursive conceptions of, for example, the permissible extent of conventional escalation India could pursue against Pakistan before threatening nuclear conflict changed over episodes, so did the government policy behaviour in light of this change.

[369] Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Arsenal*, p. 106.

It is important to note that this study does not claim that strategic discourse automatically decides policy. As well as viewing the discursive landscape reconstructed here on a nuclear policy issue, political leaders also, for example, have access to intelligence information, are exposed to internal bureaucratic pressures from the nuclear scientific complex regarding nuclear policy, and are subject to their own individual idiosyncrasies.

However, as seen in our study, these other inputs are not so influential as to visibly undermine the input of strategic discourse in policymaking. Indeed, a situation in which the government policy bore no correlation to the policy options in the strategic discourse did not present itself once in our study. Moreover, as we will see in the next section examining our second research question, there was even greater granularity to the tendency of government policy to correlate with policy options developed in the strategic discourse.

9.3 Research Question II: Does Dominant Opinion in Indian Nuclear Strategic Discourse Correlate to Nuclear Force Policymaking?

This second research question concerns the extent to which government policy tended to correlate with more popular as opposed to less popular policy options developed in the discourse. This question would only be relevant if the first question – whether government policy aligns with any option in the discourse – had first been proven in our study. Given that the study has shown that strategic discourse does correlate with nuclear policy choices for policymakers, this question looked in more detail at the specific nature of this correlation. Was there any pattern to the selection of policy options by policymakers? Were there common attributes that tended to define successful policy options? This could be their level of popularity in the discourse, as the primary research question; but were there also other attributes? This could constitute, for example, a primarily leftist, centrist or conservative political support base, or a clear pro-restraint or pro-maximalist view on nuclear policy.

To answer this question, the analysis of each discourse included a summary of the percentage of support of each option within that discourse and the political support base in terms of the political leanings of the authors supporting each option. This study has found two clear patterns. Firstly, the government policy tends to correlate with the first or second most popular option in the discourse as its policy. Secondly, the successful policy option tends to

have a robust base of centrist political support. A table summarising this relationship is provided below.

Table 35: Relationship of Government Policies to Policy Options in Discourses

Episode	***Government Decision (Select Option/Combine Options/Select Option Outside Discourse)***	***Popularity Ranking of Option in Strategic Discourse***
1: 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	Select Option: Take All Measures to Develop Overt Nuclear Force	First
2: 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	Select Option: Develop Full Nuclear Doctrine Incorporating Declaratory Measures of Nuclear Restraint, Including No-First-Use	Second
3: 1999 Kargil War Crisis	Select Option: Evict Pakistani Forces Solely by Conventional Means	First
4: 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	Select Option: Build Multilateral Political and Military Pressure on Pakistan	First
5: 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	Select Option: Develop a New Official Nuclear Doctrine	First
6: 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	Select Option: Implement Nuclear Agreement that Lifts Sanctions, Retains Indian Control over Nuclear Force and Separates Civil from Military Programmes	First
7: 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	Select Option: Build International Pressure for Pakistan to Bring Perpetrators to Justice and Strengthen Internal Security	Joint Second

This finding adds further granularity to the relationship of discourse to policy, in that the specific attributes of successful policy options developed by the discourse can be discernable. Given that the government policy always correlated with a policy option from the discourse on that nuclear policy topic, it allows us to anticipate that a numerically dominant nuclear policy option, with a strong base of centrist support in Indian strategic discourse, will be highly likely to correlate with the ultimate government nuclear policy.

Given that centrist support is evidently a key criterion for successful policy options, where the "centre" of discourse lay in each episode assumed prime importance for India's nuclear policy response. As shown by our measurement instruments of the attitude score and polarisation index for each episode, the "centre" of opinion both travelled on the spectrum during the course of our study, and also was frequently part of a highly polarised discourse concerning whether a pro-restraint or pro-maximal nuclear policy direction should be adopted. Indeed, the degree of polarisation – reaching in the 2001-3 Doctrine decision a score of 0.95, with 1 representing the point of extreme polarisation – indicates again the strength and vibrancy of Indian strategic debate. The full implications of Indian discursive polarisation will be analysed in the concluding section.

Where the "centre" lay on the spectrum of pro-restraint and pro-maximal nuclear policy opinions formed an important data point not just given its importance to shaping successful policy options, but also in allowing us to see how the Indian nuclear discourse evolved over time. The organising value of nuclear restraint formed the anchoring norm of the discourse during the first three episodes in our study. Policy options were largely argued in terms of how they could most emphatically communicate an Indian nuclear policy of restraint, through measures such as a doctrine clearly explaining the limited role of nuclear weapons in Indian defence, dedicated outreach to Pakistan and China to develop confidence-building measures, and voluntary restraint measures such as a no-first-use policy.

As shown in the table below, the political centre progressively moved deeper into the pro-restraint side of the opinion spectrum, to reach its absolute pro-restraint pole of -1 in the Kargil episode. The policy options selected by government increasingly reflected this theme of the discourse as it gathered strength – the 1998 decision to conduct nuclear tests reflected strong support for a minimalist conception of building a small nuclear force, while the much more robust pro-restraint attitude scores of the two subsequent decisions were reflected both

in the range of options promoted by their discourses and the option selected by government. As the political centre moved further toward pro-restraint arguments, so too did government policy.

Table 36: Attitude Scores for Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1: 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2: 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
3: 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4: 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**
5: 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.18**
6: 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.07**
7: 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**-1**

The 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis, however, marked the end of this trend. The public frustration at the audacity of Pakistan in sponsoring the groups that conducted this attack; the growing belief that the military restraint that India had shown in the Kargil war had not achieved anything; and, from the political centre, a resulting desire to escalate the crisis in

order to “punish” Pakistan formed core aspects of this discourse. Compared to previous episodes, this formed an erosion of the organising norm of nuclear restraint in strategic culture. From a range of several policy options that would escalate the crisis, the government selected a more politically and militarily aggressive approach toward Pakistan that brought both states very close to major war. Support for maximalist nuclear policies continued to grow following this episode, with a question now being whether this alternative organising norm could even soon assume the stature that nuclear restraint had enjoyed in the early part of our study.

Indeed, the next two episodes – that of the 2001-3 Nuclear Doctrine and 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement – were the first to feature attitude scores in the pro-maximalist end of the spectrum. The 2001-3 Doctrine discourse expressed wide-ranging concerns about the perceived inability of the 1999 nuclear doctrine to provide a credible nuclear arsenal, and advocated for a new doctrine to advance nuclear force development. That such a doctrine and force be guided by a norm of nuclear restraint was much less of a concern in this discourse than that of the 1999 doctrine, with the emphasis instead on building the operational capability and destructive capacity of the arsenal.

This highlighted again the gradual dissipation of the restraint norm, shown by the movement of the centre of the 2001-3 Doctrine discourse to support this highly different view of the nuclear force compared to its position in the 1998-9 Doctrine discourse. This process was further reflected by the 2001-3 discourse being the most polarised yet, with the consensus in favour of nuclear restraint of the early episodes in our study now being replaced by stark disagreement between pro-restraint and pro-maximal authors.

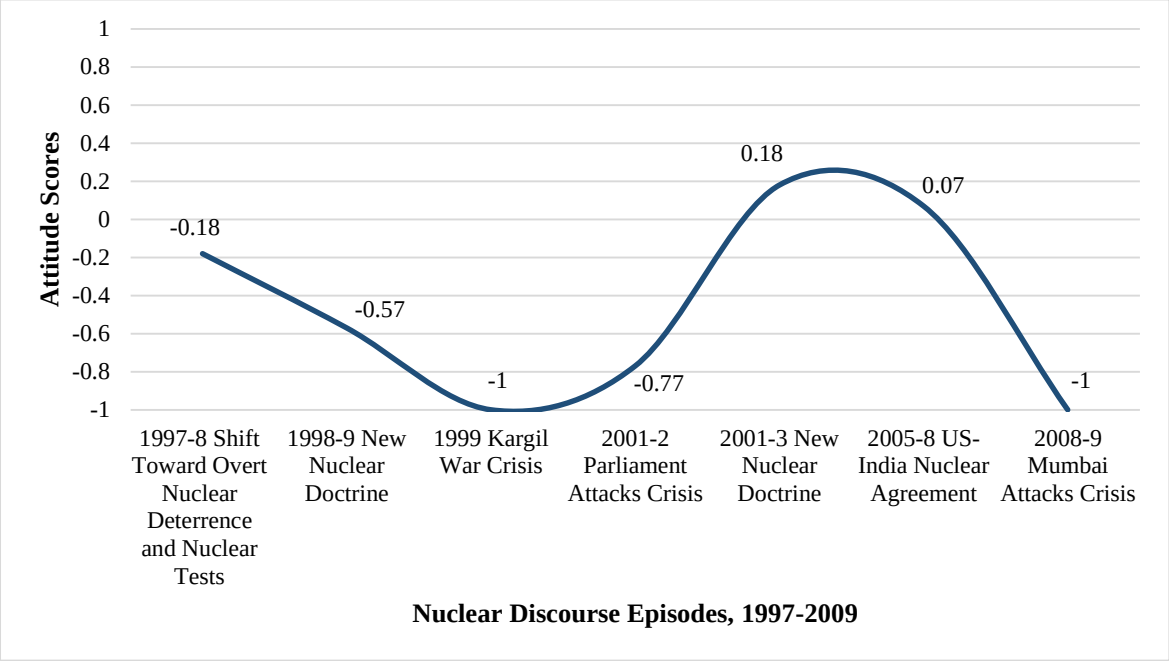
The 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement discourse obtained a slightly less pro-maximal attitude score than the 2001-3 Doctrine discourse, but one that was still in the pro-maximal side of the opinion spectrum. The majority of the discourse, including nearly all of the centrist contributors, supported implementing a nuclear agreement with the United States. However, this was conditioned upon India retaining full flexibility to develop its nuclear force as it wished. Indeed, a substantial element of the discourse rejected any prospective nuclear agreement outright, for the principal reason that it may somewhere have committed India to restraint regarding its nuclear force development.

Given that an erosion of the formerly dominant restraint norm following the Parliament attacks and rising support for the alternative maximalist norm appeared to be the emerging theme of our study, the great test of this theme would be the next crisis episode. As a Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack in 2001 had wrought such changes on Indian nuclear discourse and driven the political centre to support escalatory actions, what effects would the next major attack on India bring in terms of discourse and policy responses?

This attack came in the form of the 2008-9 Mumbai crisis episode, and brought a discursive shift perhaps as abrupt as that concerning the 2001-2 attacks. The seeming trend away from pro-restraint arguments and toward pro-maximalist arguments was arrested, and an absolute consensus instead demonstrated in favour of nuclear restraint that had not been seen since the 1999 Kargil war episode. However, this still left a core difference from Kargil, expressed at the level of policy options in the Mumbai discourse: conventional military strikes upon Pakistani territory, which had first entered our study as a policy option in the Parliament attacks crisis, persisted as a prominent option in this discourse.

Indian nuclear strategic culture thus looked unlikely to entirely return to the level of restraint seen in the Kargil crisis; however, it did demonstrate in this last episode that nuclear restraint as an organising value had a greater resilience in Indian nuclear thought than could be anticipated following the trends leading from the Parliament attacks episode. The full meaning of this finding for India's nuclear future will be discussed in the concluding section. A chart is provided below highlighting the transition in attitude scores over the course of this study.

Figure 29: Episode Attitude Scores, 1997-2009



9.4 Research Question III: Are the New Nuclear Capabilities Available to India following the 1998 Tests Encouraging Reconsideration of India's Nuclear Posture and Doctrine in Strategic Discourse?

This third research question was investigated by analysing the various influences within the strategic discourse on India's nuclear policy in each episode, and among them the nature and degree of perceived influence on Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as compared to other influences. The discursive perceptions of relevant issues to India's nuclear choices shaped their development of policy options that would inform government policy. Therefore, understanding which issues were seen as most influential, and in what way, would be essential to providing the fullest reconstruction of the strategic discourse and discerning the most prominent inputs to the strategic discourse, which then shaped policy.

The hypothesis for this research question was that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements would serve as a prominent influence in the strategic discourse, and be a core perceived influence for changing Indian attitudes to the nuclear force over the course of our study. This hypothesis was validated: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was a recurrent principal

influence, forming the third most cited influence across the episodes in our study, but also as measured in all random samples. This is shown in the tables below.

Table 37: Hierarchy of Influences in Episodes

Influence	**Number of Episodes as Most Cited Influence**	**Number of Episodes as Second Most Cited Influence**	**Number of Episodes as Third Most Cited Influence**	**Number of Episodes as Fourth Most Cited Influence**	**Total Appearances in Top Four Most Cited Influences**
Pakistani Pressures	4	1	1		**6**
American Pressures	1	4	1		**6**
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements		4	1		**5**
Domestic Partisan Politics			3	1	**4**
Nuclear Doctrine	2			1	**3**
Economic and Developmental Needs		1		1	**2**
Chinese Pressures			2		**2**
Other State Pressures				2	**2**
CTBT/FMCT Pressures				1	**1**
Indian Global Aspirations				1	**1**
Bureaucratic Influences					**0**
Disarmament Pressures					**0**
NPT Membership Pressures					**0**

Table 38: Hierarchy of Influences in All Random Samples

Influence	***Articles Citing Influence, 1997-2009***
American Pressures	510
Pakistani Pressures	437
Nuclear Force Technical Advancements	387
Chinese Pressures	309
Domestic Partisan Politics	288
Other State Pressures	288
Nuclear Doctrine	280
Indian Global Aspirations	277
Economic and Developmental Needs	236
Disarmament Pressures	145
CTBT/FMCT Pressures	135
Bureaucratic Influences	125
NPT Membership Pressures	121

As a key perceived determinant of India's nuclear options within the discourse, tracing the specific relevance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in each episode permits us to understand its role in shaping the discourse and how this may have changed over time. As we can see in the table below, views of the precise significance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements to India's nuclear policy options changed over time.

Table 39: Framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as Influence in Discourses

Episode	**Framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements as Influence**
1: 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	Majority view that India should possess a small nuclear force
2: 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	Majority view that new nuclear force options available to India following the 1998 tests required codification in a new nuclear doctrine clearly guided by restraint
3: 1999 Kargil War Crisis	Universal consensus that Indian nuclear force was not usable in this conflict and ruled out Indian crossborder conventional attack through fear of escalation, but had still not deterred Pakistan from conventional provocations
4: 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	Majority view that Indian nuclear force was not usable in this conflict, although for the first time a minority confidence that nuclear possession would protect India from consequences of escalating crisis
5: 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	Majority view that Indian nuclear force development was insufficient, and required a new nuclear doctrine
6: 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	Majority view that nuclear agreement should protect full flexibility for India to advance nuclear force development
7: 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	Majority view that Indian nuclear force was not usable in this conflict, although a minority confidence that nuclear possession would protect India from consequences of escalating crisis

The changing perceptions of the role that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements played in shaping policy options could be most visibly discerned in two trends: in the differences between the 1998-9 and 2001-3 Nuclear Doctrine discourses; and the rival perspectives of the role of the nuclear force in Indian defence differentiating crisis from non-crisis discourses.

The transition in views on the nuclear force from the 1998-9 to 2001-3 episodes reflected a growing acceptance that: the overt nuclear force was now a permanent feature of India's nuclear arsenal; that communicating and reasserting India's commitment to the value of nuclear restraint became progressively less important than operationalising a credible nuclear arsenal, representing a shift toward pro-maximalist arguments; and that India should thus resist further nuclear restraint measures than what it had unilaterally committed to in the 1999 doctrine. The array of policy options in the 1999 discourse had largely represented a competition to include the most restraint measures – for example a no-first-use policy, a minimalist nuclear force as a guiding principle, and specific limits to nuclear force size – as further underlined by the attitude score of -0.57, firmly in the pro-restraint column, for this overall episode.

The popular framing of this issue in the discourse was to observe that since the 1998 tests had now provided the material capabilities sufficient for Indian nuclear deterrence, the urgent task now was to locate the use of these capabilities within a doctrine clearly animated by nuclear restraint, including adopting several unilateral restraint measures. The attitude score for articles citing Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in this episode moved even deeper into the pro-restraint column, to -0.68, as compared to the overall score for this discourse.

There was a real reconsideration of these assumptions in the 2001-3 Doctrine episode. The dominant framing of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements in the 2001-3 episode was to assess the technical progress of Indian nuclear force development; sceptically question whether the 1999 doctrine and the nuclear policies associated with it had actually secured India and encouraged the emergence of credible nuclear assets; and call for a new nuclear doctrine that would ramp up nuclear force development, with the importance of restraint measures in this doctrine much less of a concern. This perceptual approach was visibly more receptive to maximalist as opposed to pro-restraint nuclear thought. This point was amplified by the attitude score of 0.18 for this discourse, in the pro-maximalist end of the opinion

spectrum. Articles citing Nuclear Force Technical Advancements were even more supportive of maximalist thinking, with an attitude score of 0.4.

While the 2003 nuclear doctrine retained most of the restraint measures of the 1999 draft, these now came under particular criticism from the discourse surrounding it. The 2003 doctrine, as we have seen, placed certain new caveats on the formerly blanket no-first-use policy, introducing new scenarios in which India could use the nuclear force. The very different views of the significance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements to these discourses underlay these transitions in nuclear thought.

Indeed, the 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement discourse evidenced further support for the 2003 as opposed to the 1999 perceptions of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements. There was a majority view across the 2005-8 discourse that a nuclear agreement should not limit in any way India's ability to develop a nuclear force as it sees fit. Furthermore, the foundational argument of the prominent hawkish and pro-BJP opposition to an agreement was that these two objectives were incompatible, and that the only way to safeguard India's nuclear force development flexibility was to reject any nuclear agreement.

There again also continued greater interest in the principle in building a credible nuclear arsenal than communicating continued Indian support for nuclear restraint; even supporters of an agreement were compelled to argue that an agreement would not stand in the way of any future Indian nuclear development plans. We can therefore see a real change in Indian views of the relevance of Nuclear Force Technical Advancements over the course of our study, with the early focus on nuclear restraint and a small arsenal limited by several restraint measures giving way to greater support for maximalist arguments for prioritising technical credibility and doctrinal flexibility regarding the nuclear force instead.

9.4.1 Crisis and Non-Crisis Differences

However, it is important to nevertheless read these changes in their specific context of non-crisis episodes, in which contributors to the discourse had the luxury of considering alternative nuclear outlooks in peacetime. The trend of the erosion of nuclear restraint and growing support for maximalism remained largely a non-crisis episode phenomenon, and was

far less pronounced in crisis episodes where potential war loomed. The pro-restraint consensus of the 1999 doctrine largely persisted in the three crisis episodes – the 1999 Kargil war, 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis, and 2008-9 Mumbai attacks crisis – as contributors to these discourses advocated nuclear restraint either universally or in large majorities. Faced with the prospect of war, the growing peacetime support for maximalist thinking encouraging of a greater role for the nuclear force in Indian defence largely dissipated, and analysts returned to a view of the nuclear force as a last-resort measure and unusable in any other context. Attitude scores for these episodes either occupied the absolute pro-restraint pole of -1 or a score close to it.

In the Kargil war episode, commentators recognised that the Indian nuclear force had not deterred Pakistan from military provocations, and instead had limited India's ability to respond due to the fear of conventional escalation leading to nuclear conflict. With the nuclear force entirely unusable, the policy available to India thus became one of removing Pakistani infiltrators at the lowest possible level of conventional escalation. The main shift from this view in the Parliament attacks discourse was a similar consensus (although no longer universal) in favour of nuclear restraint, but with a more permissive view of the level of conventional operations that India could afford against Pakistan without threatening nuclear conflict. The Mumbai attacks discourse held this latter view of the unusability of the nuclear force but belief that India enjoyed room on the escalation ladder for a conventional military strike without risk of this having nuclear consequences.

The growing support for maximalist nuclear policy thinking and assigning the nuclear force a greater role in Indian defence in non-crisis episodes therefore largely vanished when India was confronted with a major attack or military contingency. This highlights that Nuclear Force Technical Advancements played a role in reshaping Indian perceptions of its nuclear options over the course of our study; but these transitions were largely confined to non-crisis episodes. This notable difference between crisis and non-crisis episodes has important implications for India's nuclear future, and will be discussed in more detail in the concluding section.

9.4.2 Principal Influences on Nuclear Policy

It is also important to note that while Nuclear Force Technical Advancements was one of the most prominent influences on India's nuclear discourse, it was not the single most important influence. Above it in the top four most cited influences in episodes were Pakistani Pressures and American Pressures; and below it was Domestic Partisan Politics. This suggests that the actions of Islamabad and Washington have great impact on Indian nuclear discourse and policy, as do the parliamentary process and policy stances of Indian political parties.

As the most popular influence in episodes, and second most popular in the full random samples of our study, the intentions and activities of Islamabad had a primary shaping influence on Indian nuclear discourse. Perceptions in Indian nuclear discourse of the role of Pakistan most frequently divided in two. One group of analysts called for an Indian approach that punished or built enough forces to deter Pakistan for its provocations; while a second admitted these provocations but observed that peace with Pakistan could only amount from dialogue, and that Indian attacks or countermeasures would only prolong regional instability.

A concerning development toward the end of our study was the growing number of analysts supporting the former approach, represented by the policy option calling for conventional crossborder strikes in both the Parliament attacks and Mumbai attacks episodes. Given the prominent role Islamabad has in the Indian nuclear strategic discourse, this would suggest that a renewed peace outreach from Islamabad toward New Delhi would strengthen and validate the arguments of Indian analysts that support dialogue, while helping arrest the general trend toward pro-maximalist nuclear thinking in India by reducing general Pakistani threat perceptions within its discourse.

As the second most popular influence in episodes, and most popular in the full random samples of the study, the intentions and activities of Washington also held great weight within Indian nuclear discourse. This was always a prominent factor in non-crisis episodes. However, this was less so in the first Kargil crisis episode, as this was largely as a bilateral affair between India and Pakistan. As our study progressed through the Parliament and Mumbai attacks episodes, though, the influence of Washington increased in the discourse. The United States came to be seen as a useful crisis mediator, and authors frequently argued

that Indian diplomacy must ensure that an inevitably involved Washington be on the side of New Delhi as opposed to Islamabad.

In non-crisis situations, American Pressures provided an essential stimulant for an Indian nuclear policy response. In the 1997-8 Nuclear Tests discourse, sentiments of American opposition to Indian possession of a nuclear option and the hypocrisy of Washington in keeping nuclear weapons only for itself underlay much of the popular drive for a move toward overt Indian nuclear deterrence, partly as an assertion of national will against the preferences of the United States. In the 1998-9 and 2001-3 Doctrine discourses, a notable theme was the flaws of American nuclear doctrines and the opportunity for India to demonstrate its superior nuclear education through the doctrine it developed.

Toward the end of the study, the influence of the United States devolved into two main framings, which became most clearly visible in the 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement discourse. Neither evinced any considerable warmth toward Washington. One approach argued: that the United States was the essential world power that India had no choice but to deal with, and that a nuclear agreement would allow New Delhi to extract what it could from Washington in terms of economic, defence technology and energy benefits while avoiding alliance commitments. The second camp saw Washington in imperialist terms, arguing that its tentacles of influence must be kept entirely away from India and that the nuclear agreement represented a Trojan horse to impose American control over India's nuclear future.

These overall perceptions of the United States in the discourse do not suggest evidence of a strong constituency welcoming of a greater American role in Indian strategic planning and greater Indian strategic consultation with the United States outside a crisis. For American policymakers, this would suggest that quiet diplomacy, rather than the hectoring approach that was so fiercely criticised in the 1997-8 nuclear tests discourse, will better advance American strategic objectives and obtain a more beneficial framing in Indian strategic discourse.

After Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, the fourth greatest influence in episodes (fifth in all random samples of the study) was Domestic Partisan Politics. The prominence of this factor further underlines the hypothesis of this study that major nuclear policy decisions are informed by opinions set outside the internal government defence bureaucracy. The common

framing of this issue was to cite specific parliamentary remarks on nuclear policy, and to call for an educated political debate and following parliamentary consensus on the nuclear issue at hand. The collaborative support of Parliament, this framing ran, would strengthen the mandate behind the eventual nuclear policy agreed upon. Where there were prominent political divisions on the nuclear policy issue – most visibly in the 2001-2 Parliament attacks and 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement episodes – authors would frequently bemoan attempts by governing or opposition parties to reap political advantage from a specific stance rather than working across parliament to evolve a united Indian nuclear approach.

An interesting theme of the 1998-9 and 2001-3 Doctrine discourses had also been a frequent argument in favour of developing a doctrine as an exercise to improve parliamentary knowledge of nuclear and defence policy. Contributors to the strategic discourse in our study thus felt that parliamentary influence had an important effect on nuclear policy, and that building parliamentary expertise and consensus on nuclear issues was essential to developing credible Indian policies.

Given their prominence in our study, these four factors – Pakistani Pressures, American Pressures, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements, and Domestic Partisan Politics – are the most influential in shaping perceptions and arguments within Indian nuclear discourse that then inform its development of policy options that correlate with eventual government policy. This finding will usefully inform future research on Indian nuclear policy, in isolating the most prominent influences for special attention.

Among the nine other factors that were also included in our list of influences for each discourse, the appearance of Chinese Pressures only twice in the top four list across the seven episodes in our study, and absence of Bureaucratic Influences in this list, are particularly remarkable. Both evidently influence Indian nuclear policy – Prime Minister Vajpayee detailed Chinese nuclear activities as part of his rationale for conducting the 1998 nuclear tests in a letter to US President Clinton, while the Indian defence scientific complex is given great leeway in technical design of the nuclear force.[370]

[370] "Nuclear Anxiety: Indian's Letter to Clinton on the Nuclear Testing", New York Times, May 13, 1998; O'Donnell and Pant, "Evolution of India's Agni-V Missile", pp. 584-610. Recent Indian iterations of the Agni missile suite, such as the Agni-III and Agni-IV, have also been developed specifically with China in mind. See

The relatively low profile of Chinese Pressures in episodes of this study, compared to that of Pakistan as India's other great rival, can be accounted for by the three Pakistan-focused crises in this study, with comparative quietude in the India-China nuclear relationship over this timeframe. The longer list of Indian wars and crises with Pakistan as opposed to China also meant that Pakistan had a prominent role in non-crisis Indian nuclear discourses, such as the 1998-9 and 2001-3 Doctrine episodes, with Pakistani provocations as the prominent background context of discussions.

Had the Indian relationship with China witnessed as many defence standoffs and major security incidents with potential nuclear consequences as that with Pakistan during the course of our study, Chinese Pressures would likely have earned a higher citation count in episodes as a prominent influence on the nuclear policy issue India faced. Indeed, its continuing role as an importance influence on nuclear policy is highlighted by its position as fourth most cited influence when measured in all random samples of the study.

Bureaucratic Influences also attracted less attention in nuclear discourses than might be anticipated, given that the internal governmental influence of the defence scientific enclave does have a role in shaping technical nuclear force development, such as the new Agni suite of nuclear missiles. The operation of this enclave is largely within the halls of government, but its influence also enters the discourse through advocacy of its interests by its retired officials. These contributions in the discourse were most prominent in the 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement episode, the only one that threatened to restructure the defence scientific enclave.

We would likely have seen Bureaucratic Influences as a greater perceived influence in the discourse had there been additional policy discourses that threatened the inherent operation of the defence scientific enclave; or had a technical question such as the status of a missile rose to the level of major nuclear policy question as the others in our study. Bureaucratic Influences do have an input in the nuclear policy process. However, on the level of these major nuclear decisions taken by political leaders in our study, there was still this correlation

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Pandit, Rajat, "Agni-III, with China in Range, to be Tested", Times of India, June 20, 2009; and Times of India staff, "Nuclear-Capable Agni-IV Test-Fired Successfully, has China in Sight", Times of India, December 3, 2014.

with the policy options developed by strategic discourse outside government. This suggests again the position of strategic culture as supplying an input for the policymaking process.

9.5 Conclusion: India's Nuclear Journey

Over the course of this tumultuous period in India's nuclear history, our study has found a rich, vibrant strategic discourse in each episode that generates policy options that correlate with eventual government policy. As the generator of strategic culture, these strategic discourses also demonstrate that strategic culture not only exists in India but furthermore has an input in the policymaking process.

This substantially develops the early literature on contemporary Indian nuclear discourse, and suggests a useful methodology for analysing the relationship of strategic culture to a certain Indian policy decision. Replicating the methodology of this study for other Indian nuclear, defence or foreign policy decisions could provide researchers with a full understanding of the context of available policy options in the strategic discourse, the hierarchy and framing of influences on the policy issue, and the arguments and constellations of political support underpinning each policy option.

Indeed, the most surprising development of this study has been the degree to which it undermines the image of a remote Indian defence bureaucracy and policymaking process impenetrable to analysts outside government. Through this study of strategic discourse, the essential perceptions and policy options available to government can be understood. This study therefore opens horizons to new work on strategic discourse, nuclear policy research, and applying this methodology to non-Indian contexts to see the degree to which it can be universalised.

This study has important theoretical implications for the study of strategic culture. It especially contests the understanding of the basis and functioning of strategic culture advanced by Johnston and Tanham. For these authors, strategic culture forms a lens through which questions concerning the use of force are viewed. The characteristics of this lens are established by the prescriptions of cultural artifacts, with their literal dictates as the

wellspring for a near-static strategic culture. These artifacts can only be found in the deep literary (for Johnston) or Hindu religious (for Tanham) history of a security community.

However, Indian historical literature and Hindu theological concepts are mentioned only very rarely in the articles in our study, and in those instances as turns of phrase or brief parables to give colour to the article rather than its principal justificatory force. Indeed, as we have seen with the nature of contestation between the norms of nuclear minimalism and maximalism over the course of our study, and their varying salience depending on security crisis or peacetime situations, the characteristics of strategic culture can be more nuanced and conditional on context than allowed by an understanding of it based upon historical essences.

My approach of investigating contemporary strategic discourse and the concepts, arguments and policy options developed through this discourse instead offers a more accurate reading of the characteristics and functioning of the strategic culture of a security community. Applying this approach to future studies of strategic culture in different security communities will build understanding of its underlying perceptual concepts and effects on policy, and move the academic literature on strategic culture away from searches for inflexible foundational historical or religious essences. This study and methodology can therefore stimulate new directions in international relations research on strategic culture.

Indeed, the relationship of strategic discourse to policymaking that this study has identified begs comparative replication to the strategic discourse and nuclear policies of other nuclear weapons states. Given the construction of this methodology upon the premise of a democratic state with a free media able to conceive and issue nuclear policy opinion independent from that of the government, the most obvious candidates for replication studies would be nuclear democracies such as the United States, Britain and France. States with a government-controlled media, such as China, would require substantial adjustment of this methodology. This adjustment would have to address the problem of the strategic discourse to be studied merely serving as another mouthpiece for the government, thus prohibiting the structural separation, categorisation and comparison of "discourse" and "policy" that our study here has conducted. Further methodological issues would present themselves in applying this analysis

to Pakistan, where military institutions coerce and influence reporting and opinion and commentators critical of the government can face assassination.[371]

Nuclear restraint – the minimalist view that nuclear weapons should play a primarily political rather than military role in Indian defence, and that they are unusable in all but the gravest security conflicts – as an organising value for Indian nuclear strategic culture has proven its influence throughout this study. However, a notable finding of our research has been the degree to which non-crisis policy issues featured a gradual dissipation in support for nuclear restraint and correspondingly growing support for nuclear maximalism, but then this tendency disappearing with a major security crisis and an overwhelming consensus for nuclear restraint reappearing. This is most starkly visible if we divide episodes and their attitude scores by their status as crisis or non-crisis episodes, as shown in the tables below.

Table 40: Attitude Scores for Non-Crisis Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
1: 1997-8 Shift Toward Overt Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Tests	**-0.18**
2: 1998-9 New Nuclear Doctrine	**-0.57**
5: 2001-3 New Nuclear Doctrine	**0.18**
6: 2005-8 US-India Nuclear Agreement	**0.07**

[371] International Media Support, *Between Radicalisation and Democratisation,* pp. 25-33.

Table 41: Attitude Scores for Crisis Discourses on Policy Decisions

Policy Decision	***Attitude Score (Score of 1 absolute preference for maximal nuclear policies; score of -1 absolute preference for restrained nuclear policies)***
3: 1999 Kargil War Crisis	**-1**
4: 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis	**-0.77**
7: 2008-9 Mumbai Attacks Crisis	**-1**

In non-crisis episodes, there is a shift toward rethinking the political and military purpose of the Indian nuclear force, and not in a pro-restraint direction. The 2003 nuclear doctrine included a loosening of the no-first-use commitment of its precursor 1999 doctrine, bolstered by much greater support for maximalist nuclear thinking and emphasising the operational readiness rather than minimalist restraint of the Indian nuclear force in the 2003 as compared to the 1999 discourse. The protection of India's ability to field a nuclear force of a size and capability of its own choosing was a rare point of majority agreement in the fractious 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement discourse, with any prospective acceptance of new restraint commitments as a price of the agreement ruled out. A substantial volume of the discourse indeed rejected any prospective agreement and the economic, energy and defence technology benefits it would bring due to a belief that this would somehow inextricably constrain Indian nuclear force development.

However, discursive movements toward a more maximalist Indian nuclear future were not continued when a new crisis emerged. Any Indian nuclear response was either universally or almost universally ruled out in each discourse, with variations only in the level of conventional response India could venture without risk of nuclear escalation. This suggests a dangerous discrepancy in comparative nuclear risk appetites in the more frequent non-crisis episodes, when many of the political and doctrinal decisions shaping Indian nuclear force

development are made, and crisis episodes, when a different view emphasising the real military unusability of the nuclear force dominates. This tendency has in fact been observed by Basrur, who holds that it is an intrinsic element of discourse in all nuclear weapons states:

> *"When conflict draws close, they reject the usability of nuclear weapons and ignore the tenets of deterrence theory and doctrine; but when conflict is distant, they behave as if the weapons are usable and allow the same principles to influence their doctrines and weapons acquisitions."*[372]

A central lesson for Indian nuclear policy flowing from this study is for contributors to the strategic discourse and policymakers to recognise their tendency to recommend a greater role for nuclear weapons in Indian defence in peacetime, and to fully realise the real dangers of nuclear weapons only in the midst of security crises. The view of nuclear weapons that dominates in crises should be the one that is remembered and informs Indian nuclear discourse and thus policy in peacetime. This will avoid waste in building multiple expansive nuclear platforms planned and developed in peacetime; a small force, intended and developed specifically only as a last-resort option if India is facing political and territorial extinction, will be better tailored toward the most likely use of the Indian nuclear force, as has been demonstrated in the security crises throughout our study. It will also more closely reflect the organising principle of nuclear restraint that is the overall characteristic element of Indian nuclear strategic culture.

The findings of this study also has important policy implications for the global non-proliferation regime and for understanding India's rise as an international power. The extreme caution of Indian strategic discourse and policy regarding nuclear weapons in successive security crisis situations – to the extent in the Kargil discourse of mass stigmatisation of any Indian author that dared to verbalise the opinion that nuclear weapons might serve a role in settling the crisis – supports the arguments of Indian diplomats that New Delhi holds a minimalist view of the utility of nuclear weapons and will prove a responsible actor concerning international proliferation challenges. Indeed, only one article out of the

[372] Rajesh Basrur, "Two Decades of Minimum Deterrence in South Asia: A Comparative Framework", India Review Vol. 9 No. 3 (July-September 2010) p. 301.

hundreds analysed in our study ever suggested the prospect of deliberate Indian nuclear proliferation.[373]

These minimalist aspects of Indian nuclear strategic culture and policy suggest common ground with prominent members of the global non-proliferation regime that can be built upon. Indeed, it furthermore undermines a once-popular Western framing of India and Pakistan as two equally irresponsible nuclear actors.[374] The proliferation records of Pakistan and India could not be more different, and Pakistan today shows little sign of emulating most of the declaratory voluntary nuclear restraint measures that India has adopted as an expression of its belief in minimalism. India possesses deep-held beliefs in the military unusability of nuclear weapons, as it has repeatedly reaffirmed in the midst of security crises featuring periods of great official and public anger at Pakistani provocations. India's nuclear record thus supports the claims of Indian diplomats that it will be a responsible and restrained international power with a qualitatively different outlook to that of Pakistan.

However, to advance the further integration of India into the global nonproliferation regime, the same lesson from the framing of American Influences in the study also applies here. Leading members of the nonproliferation regime will more likely achieve this integration through quiet diplomacy, rather than public pressure that instead raises the salience of external factors and thus sentiments of defiance in Indian strategic discourse.

The implications of this study therefore has particular relevance for India's nuclear future. India is now soon to field a nuclear-armed missile, the Agni-V, able to reach Beijing and Shanghai, and has not ruled out even further-reaching missiles. To most efficiently safeguard India, New Delhi should pay attention to the resilience of nuclear restraint as the dominant organising value when a crisis emerges, and apply this value to its nuclear planning in peacetime. Contributors to the Indian strategic discourse should also note this finding in recommending appropriate nuclear policy options for the government. India has had a unique and dramatic nuclear journey, and there are further steps to be taken yet.

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[373] Chellaney, "Lead Us Not into Temptation".

[374] See, for example, Jonathan Marcus, "Analysis: The World's Most Dangerous Place?", BBC News, March 23, 2000. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/687021.stm

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Appendix: Article Coding Examples

Three example articles from the random samples of this study are reproduced below, together with a summary of their coding based upon their content. The first article argues for a maximal/unrestricted nuclear force in capability and roles, obtaining an attitude score of 1. The second article argues for a minimal/restricted nuclear force in capability and roles, obtaining an attitude score of -1. The third article is neutral or unconcerned with Indian nuclear force capability or roles, but still issues an opinion on general nuclear policy, obtaining an attitude score of 0.

Article 1: Col. P.K. Vasudeva (retd.), "Moot a No-First-Use Agreement", Indian Express, May 19, 1998

"With its recent tests, India has demonstrated its capability to design a whole range of nuclear bombs qualifying it to become a member of Nuclear-weapon power states and a member of the nuclear club.

The dust of three blasts was still settling down when the world was taken by another surprise when India conducted two more underground simultaneous nuclear devices to generate additional data for improved computer simulation of designs and for attaining the capabilities to carry out subcritical experiments, if considered necessary.

India has become a real nuclear power by exploding hydrogen device of a fusion-fission-fusion combination.

This achievement has been attained only by a few countries, including USA and Russia so far. We did need a deterrent because our neighbours China-Pakistan were amassing missiles and nuclear technology unabated. What is required for India is to test its nuclear war heads. It has to stockpile couple of strategic nuclear bombs (that is hydrogen bombs) and make a few tactical nuclear war heads that can be fitted on to Prithvi and Agni missiles. Even smaller warheads that can be used in the heavy and medium artillery should be stockpiled which may have to be used as tactical nuclear device which cannot escalate a mass destruction. These

war heads should be kept as deterrents only. The two sub-kiloton nuclear devices are not only military specific, but also marks a significant technological leap as it now provides the armed forces with the choice of having a wide array of lethal tactical nuclear weapons arsenal.

The testing of sub KT – less than 1000 kg – devices has demonstrated India's capability to miniature nuclear bombs, thus providing for both greater flexibility and capability for the manufacture of the arsenal ranging from 500 kg to 1,000 kg nuclear war heads for Prithvi and Agni missiles, nuclear-tipped precision guidance munitions (PGMs) for fighter aircraft, nuclear tipped artillery shells for Army, specialised demolition devices for use by the special forces and submarine launch missiles.

India can now and should manufacture N-weapons meant for specified targets both within and outside the battle zone. Su-30 fighter aircraft can make a drop from 80 km distance on vital enemy targets within a limited but effective damage within seconds. The use of tactical weapons also reduces the radioactive zone. Under the circumstances, India should invite a summit of Asian countries where Russia, China and Pakistan should be invited. These countries should agree to sign an agreement of no-first-use of nuclear weapons."

Article 1: Coding Results

***Attitude Score*:** 1. This score is derived from the author's preference for an unlimited range of nuclear warhead types and interest in tactical use of nuclear weapons, expressed throughout the article but most clearly in the penultimate and last paragraphs.

***Policy Option Supported by Article*:** "Only Declare State-by-State No-First-Use Pacts" (Option 5 in the 1998-99 Nuclear Doctrine episode). This policy option recommendation is made at the end of the last paragraph:

"Under the circumstances, India should invite a summit of Asian countries where Russia, China and Pakistan should be invited. These countries should agree to sign an agreement of no-first-use of nuclear weapons."

Perceived Influences on Nuclear Policy: Chinese Pressures, Pakistani Pressures

The article highlights nuclear threats from China and Pakistan as a core reason for India to develop an overt maximalist nuclear force:

"We did need a deterrent because our neighbours China-Pakistan were amassing missiles and nuclear technology unabated."

As China and Pakistan remain major nuclear adversaries, the article also argues that India agree no-first-use pacts with them.

Perceived Influences on Nuclear Policy: Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

The importance of the new Indian nuclear force capabilities to Indian security and to the question of a prospective nuclear doctrine is asserted throughout the article, supporting its maximalist view of India's nuclear force. This is most clearly demonstrated in the last paragraph, where the author precedes his argument for interstate no-first-use pacts by highlighting the new destructive possibilities of the Indian nuclear force:

"India can now and should manufacture N-weapons meant for specified targets both within and outside the battle zone. Su-30 fighter aircraft can make a drop from 80 km distance on vital enemy targets within a limited but effective damage within seconds. The use of tactical weapons also reduces the radioactive zone. Under the circumstances, India should invite a summit of Asian countries where Russia, China and Pakistan should be invited. These countries should agree to sign an agreement of no-first-use of nuclear weapons."

Perceived Influences on Nuclear Policy: Other State Pressures

Russia was the only state mentioned in the "Other State Pressures", category, designed to capture instances of perceived influence by states other than China, Pakistan and the United States as the three most frequently cited in Indian nuclear discourse. Russia was listed as a state with which India should sign a no-first-use pact.

Influences on Nuclear Policy Not Mentioned: American Pressures, Bureaucratic Influences, CTBT/FMCT Pressures, Disarmament Pressures, Domestic Partisan Politics, Economic and Developmental Needs, Indian Global Aspirations, NPT Membership Pressures, Nuclear Doctrine

Article 2: Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work", Frontline, June 21, 2002

Hoodbhoy's comments were structured as an interview:

"Have nuclear weapons brought more security or more insecurity to this region?
The evidence is unambiguous - since the nuclear tests of 1998, we have witnessed two full-blown India-Pakistan confrontations. During the Kargil crisis in 1999, we now know, the Pakistan Army - without the knowledge of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif - had mobilised its nuclear-tipped missile fleet. Presumably the Indians were also in a high state of nuclear readiness. The present crisis is yet more dangerous, with India breathing fire and preparing for what it calls 'limited war'. Prime Minister Vajpayee has exhorted his troops in Kashmir to prepare for sacrifice and 'decisive victory'.

Do you think that the subcontinent would have been less violent without nuclear weapons?

Absolutely so. Bellicose, aggressive behaviour has increased sharply since 1998 with the Kargil war being one consequence. In fact, this war will be recorded by historians as the first that was actually caused by nuclear weapons. Possession of nuclear weapons gave Pakistan a false sense of confidence and security, encouraging it into adventurism in Kashmir and initiating a war. Interestingly enough, the Indians shot themselves in the foot by forcing Pakistan to bring out its nuclear weapons into the open. Now they realise that their options in Kashmir are sharply limited, and the risk of mutual annihilation is a very real one.

Today, in spite of General Musharraf's speech of January 12, there is little doubt that militant camps continue to shelter under Pakistan's nuclear umbrella. They are a curse not only to India but also for Pakistan and its civil society. If the September 11 event had not occurred, they would have been stronger still. Sectarian Islamic groups have slaughtered hundreds of innocents in the last two years, including over a hundred doctors in Karachi.

You seem to agree that Pakistan's nuclear weapons have deterred India from attacking it?

There is little doubt that Pakistan's nuclear weapons stopped India from attacking after the December 13 attack by jehadists on the Indian Parliament. So in that sense I agree with you that deterrence did work. It also worked in 1999, and perhaps also in the crises of 1990 and 1987. But will it always work? Islamic jehadists - who must be considered a third force that now operates independently of the Pakistani state - crave for a full-scale war between the two countries. They could easily commit some huge atrocity which turns India into a mad bull dashing blindly into a nuclear-armed Pakistan.

While Pakistani and Indian hawks, who pose as ‘strategic analysts’ and ‘experts’, loudly trumpet that deterrence has been proven to work, events since 1998 have completely falsified their predictions. Their published claims had been that overt nuclearisation would create a stable ‘balance of terror’, making it impossible for either country even to think of attacking the other. They had also predicted smaller expenditures on defence since minimal deterrence had been established. But, as we stand on the brink of a war and in the middle of a full-blown arms race, honesty should compel them to eat their words.

Making an atomic bomb is perceived in Pakistan as a miracle. Is it really a wonder in the world of science?

The first atomic bomb was really a tremendous scientific and technological achievement. It required the finest minds in the world to smash the atom and to get the energy out of it and to create a self-sustaining chain reaction. But no longer! Now you have all this information in books, in journals, and even on the Internet. So today, almost any country in the world, leave aside Somalia and Rwanda, can make bombs. The only thing that you need is money.

At a public seminar on May 20 in Islamabad, one participant said that losing a conventional war was preferable to unleashing a nuclear holocaust. What do you say to this?

This makes eminent sense because states can lose conventional wars and re-emerge stronger. Japan and Germany are examples of countries which suffered greatly in the Second World War, but went on to become leading powers again. On the other hand, if India used nuclear weapons on Pakistan, or vice versa, it would take hundreds of years to recover. Remember, it won't be just one or two bombs as in Japan, but dozens.

Is India not responsible for the nuclearisation of South Asia?

Yes, and it is not just the Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindutva who are responsible. The Indian nuclear programme goes back to the time of Partition. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, and Homi Bhabha, the head of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission and a brilliant scientist, conceived making India a nuclear power. The China-India clash in 1962 gave the appropriate pretext, and we saw the results in 1974. But although India is clearly responsible for driving the nuclear rivalry, Pakistan's aims have shifted considerably. To counter India's nuclear weapons has become secondary. Instead, it seeks to use nuclear weapons to achieve foreign policy objectives. There is now the religious dimension too - Pakistan's Islamic parties have claimed the bomb for Islam.

There is a fear in the minds of many people here that the anti-nuclear lobby in Pakistan wants unilateral renunciation of the nuclear option. Do you support this idea of unilateral disarmament?

I am definitely anti-nuclear, but I don't believe unilateral nuclear disarmament by Pakistan at this stage is either possible or desirable. Instead, we need a set of graduated steps by which both India and Pakistan first make their arsenals safer and less useable, and then rapidly move towards their reduction and elimination. The current trend of building more bombs and missiles must be reversed.

In which country is the anti-nuclear lobby stronger: India or Pakistan?

Definitely in India! After the Indian tests, there were protests in all major cities of the country - Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai - which were attended by thousands of people. I wish we could mobilise a fraction of that. India has a more dynamic and vibrant civil society than ours.

This region seems to be on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. How can we move away from this madness?

First, we need to understand what nuclear weapons do. As we sit over here in Islamabad at the Quaid-e-Azam University - just a mile away from the Presidency and Parliament - just think of what an Indian nuclear attack would mean for us. Fortunately, you and I shall have vapourised in a matter of moments. But people who are at a distance of a few miles from the centre of the explosion won't be so lucky. They too will die, but slowly and painfully from

physical injury, radiation sickness, poisoning, cancer or the other horrible ways by which atom bombs inflict death and destruction. The public in Pakistan and India need to be informed that there are no winners in a nuclear war, and no cause great enough to justify fighting one.

Can civil defence be effective in the case of nuclear attack?

It cannot reverse tragedy, but definitely can help reduce suffering. Therefore, it is absolutely irresponsible for governments not to make effective provision for civil defence. Imagine that a nuclear weapon has been dropped on a city. Is there any pre-planning about how that city's wounded would be evacuated, and to where? How would the survivors be supplied with non-radioactive food and water? Civil defence here is a complete joke. Today's newspaper carries an item that the total yearly funds earmarked for the Civil Defence Organisation is two million rupees, and even this has not been received yet. Like ostriches, we bury our head in the sand and think that the danger is not there!

To what extent are our nuclear arsenals safe? Are we still vulnerable to a mishap such as the one that occurred at Ojhri Camp, where Central Intelligence Agency-supplied ammunition blew up in the city of Rawalpindi and killed a thousand people?

An assembled nuclear weapon can detonate if there is a fire, accidental explosion, or an airplane carrying the weapon crashes. This nightmare scenario led U.S. nuclear weapon designers to struggle for ten years or more to develop what are called 'one-point safe' nuclear weapons. Pakistani and Indian weapons are unlikely to have these very elaborate safety features, and so the danger of mishaps is non-negligible. Given how prone we are to accidents and sabotage - as evidenced in the Ojhri Camp tragedy of 1987 or the Bhopal gas tragedy - I think there is real reason for worry.

How dangerous is the present crisis in nuclear terms?

In times of crisis, everybody gets nervous. This increases the possibility that wrong information, or deliberate misinformation, could lead to the release of either a missile or an aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. These horrific possibilities become more likely as the level of tension rises and as the size of the two nuclear arsenals increases by the year. We are likely

to survive this crisis. I don't know about the next one, or the one after that. The chances are bleak unless we get rid of these terrible toys.

What are the chances of a global nuclear disarmament?

Miserable for the moment! U.S. unilateralism is set to destroy any and all arms control treaties, except those that clearly favour the U.S. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Land Mines Treaty... all have been torpedoed by President Bush. Worse, in January this year, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was leaked to the public. This document is obscene and utterly immoral! It calls for the development of operational strategies that would allow the use of nuclear weapons by the U.S. even against those states which do not possess nuclear, chemical, biological or other weapons of mass destruction. Special purpose nuclear weapons such as bunker busters and deep penetration weapons are being developed. Global nuclear arms control is dead - George W. Bush shot and killed it.

How difficult has it been for you to criticice the establishment, being a sort of government servant?

It is not easy at times, the pressure exists. But Pakistan is a more tolerant society than many people think. We have a military regime but it is not oppressive if compared with the draconian regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. Our English language press is probably just as free as the press in India. It is able to criticise Pakistani leaders very directly, without mincing words. This is a sign of hope that Pakistan is not a hopeless case where all its people are brainwashed. But there is a dark side too - Pakistan TV and the Urdu press, which reach many more people than English newspapers, unabashedly promote xenophobia.

You were chosen for the prestigious Pakistani award, the Sitara-e-Imtiaz. Why did you refuse to accept it?

Because I do not consider the process by which awards are given as carrying legitimacy. If you give someone an award in a field of science, only a panel of scientists should decide whether that person deserves it or not. A bureaucrat should not have the right to decide that a person - A or B or C - is worthy of some award. The present procedure serves only to create a culture of sycophancy that rewards flatterers.

Jean Dreze in The Hindu (May 27) quoted a senior Indian defence analyst, K. Subrahmanyam, who said that Indians could still sleep in peace because if Pakistani fingers come anywhere near the nuclear button the U.S. Army will 'disarm' Pakistan's nuclear facilities through surgical strikes. What do you say about this?

It is dangerous, and complete nonsense. Pakistan has once again become a client state of the US, but there are definite limits on the pressure that the U.S. can exert upon Pakistan. It is highly unlikely that the U.S. would have knowledge of where the Pakistani nukes are located at any given moment, much less have the will or capacity to destroy them. Remember that nukes mounted on missiles are on mobile launchers and can be moved anywhere in times of crisis. Trying to destroy nukes is something no nation has ever attempted, and the chances of success are very poor."

Article 2: Coding Results

Attitude Score: -1. The author's anti-nuclear stance is clear throughout the article, and argues for restrictions on nuclear force development and a path toward disarmament:

"…we need a set of graduated steps by which both India and Pakistan first make their arsenals safer and less useable, and then rapidly move towards their reduction and elimination. The current trend of building more bombs and missiles must be reversed."

***Policy Option Supported by Article*:** This article makes policy recommendations for two separate nuclear debates. The first recommendation is in the "New Peace Talks with Pakistan" category (Option 2 in the 2001-2 Parliament Attacks Crisis episode). This policy recommendation is for India and Pakistan to realise the inherent dangers in escalating the 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis, and agree mutual nuclear force reductions toward disarmament, as highlighted in the quotation above.

The second recommendation is in the "Develop a New Official Nuclear Doctrine to Avoid Deployment and Move Toward Disarmament" category (Option 2 in the 2001-3 Nuclear Doctrine episode. This policy recommendation was made in the same quotation above, and reinforced in another part of the article by this statement:

"…These horrific possibilities become more likely as the level of tension rises and as the size of the two nuclear arsenals increases by the year. We are likely to survive this crisis. I don't know about the next one, or the one after that. The chances are bleak unless we get rid of these terrible toys".

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: American Pressures

The author criticises the theory, popular in this episode, that India could conduct strikes upon Pakistan with the assumption that the United States would automatically intervene to halt escalation before it reached the nuclear level:

"It is dangerous, and complete nonsense. Pakistan has once again become a client state of the US, but there are definite limits on the pressure that the U.S. can exert upon Pakistan. It is highly unlikely that the U.S. would have knowledge of where the Pakistani nukes are located at any given moment, much less have the will or capacity to destroy them. Remember that nukes mounted on missiles are on mobile launchers and can be moved anywhere in times of crisis. Trying to destroy nukes is something no nation has ever attempted, and the chances of success are very poor."

The second framing of the United States in this article is to condemn its damaging approach toward global arms control efforts:

"Worse, in January this year, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was leaked to the public. This document is obscene and utterly immoral! It calls for the development of operational strategies that would allow the use of nuclear weapons by the U.S. even against those states which do not possess nuclear, chemical, biological or other weapons of mass destruction. Special purpose nuclear weapons such as bunker busters and deep penetration weapons are being developed. Global nuclear arms control is dead - George W. Bush shot and killed it."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Chinese Pressures

The article highlights India's war with China as one of the long-term motivating factors for Indian nuclear force development:

"The Indian nuclear programme goes back to the time of Partition. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, and Homi Bhabha, the head of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission and a brilliant scientist, conceived making India a nuclear power. The China-India clash in 1962 gave the appropriate pretext, and we saw the results in 1974."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: CTBT/FMCT Pressures, Disarmament Pressures

The author laments the poor outlook for global nuclear disarmament in the context of this latest 2001-2 Parliament attacks crisis, and the dim view of the CTBT held by the Bush administration. The author argues for the importance and relevance of nuclear disarmament throughout the article, and this is encapsulated in his policy recommendation.

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Domestic Partisan Politics

The author highlights the importance of domestic politics in influencing nuclear policy, toward his argument of peace talks toward disarmament:

"The public in Pakistan and India need to be informed that there are no winners in a nuclear war, and no cause great enough to justify fighting one."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Nuclear Doctrine, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

India's growing nuclear force capabilities, and current nuclear doctrine of overt deterrence, are listed as very damaging influences on Indian nuclear and security policy:

"While Pakistani and Indian hawks, who pose as 'strategic analysts' and 'experts', loudly trumpet that deterrence has been proven to work, events since 1998 have completely falsified their predictions. Their published claims had been that overt nuclearisation would create a stable 'balance of terror', making it impossible for either country even to think of attacking the other. They had also predicted smaller expenditures on defence since minimal deterrence had been established. But, as we stand on the brink of a war and in the middle of a full-blown arms race, honesty should compel them to eat their words."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Other State Pressures

Japan and Germany are cited to support the anti-nuclear argument of the author, in response to an interview question regarding whether it is wiser to lose a conventional war rather than escalate the war to the nuclear level:

"This makes eminent sense because states can lose conventional wars and re-emerge stronger. Japan and Germany are examples of countries which suffered greatly in the Second World War, but went on to become leading powers again."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Pakistani Pressures

The security dangers wrought by Pakistan's nuclear force development, and its aggressiveness following the 1998 nuclear tests, are emphasised throughout the article. A concise summary of this framing of Pakistan is here:

"Bellicose, aggressive behaviour has increased sharply since 1998 with the Kargil war being one consequence. In fact, this war will be recorded by historians as the first that was actually caused by nuclear weapons. Possession of nuclear weapons gave Pakistan a false sense of confidence and security, encouraging it into adventurism in Kashmir and initiating a war."

Influences on Nuclear Policy Not Mentioned: Bureaucratic Influences, Economic and Developmental Needs, NPT Membership Pressures, Other State Pressures

Article 3: Sunanda K. Datta-Ray, "A Fragile Balance", Telegraph, August 25, 2007

"It is tempting to hope that the furore over the so-called 123 agreement will result in an examination and clarification of both India's nuclear aims and Indian attitudes to the United States of America. But both sides are so mired in obfuscation on both points that the heat of argument may shed no light at all on an aspect of life that exposes us to ridicule if not contempt.

What must be unambiguously stated at the outset is that most Indians would trust Manmohan Singh to safeguard the nation's interest and dignity rather than Prakash Karat. Secondly, Left Front obstructiveness must be a cause of great glee in Beijing, since it is possible that China will be spared the awkwardness of striking a dissonant note when the Nuclear Suppliers Group meets, as it is scheduled to do next May unless the US calls an earlier extraordinary meeting. With friends like the Left Front, India needs no enemies.

No position can be taken at face value. Left Front members will go on posturing about the dangers of being drawn into America's strategic embrace while its stellar characters play footsie with the US. I have mentioned before the Marxist mayor who approached the American consul-general to twin Calcutta with San Francisco so that he could officially visit his son who was studying there. Many more such instances of duplicity can be cited. Across the divide, the government will go on talking about nuclear energy. Nobody knows better that this is not what the Pokhran bangs were all about, but it's the fig leaf the government hopes the Americans will mistake for an olive branch. In the US, the Congress, Democrat or Republican, will continue to talk about safeguards and conditions when what it really wants is to roll back and cap India's nuclear capability.

George W. Bush's administration is more practical. As his Asia Society speech on the eve of his Indian visit made clear, Americans need India's expanding market for everything from washing machines to hamburgers. In foreign policy, Bush seeks an Asian ally other than Japan to not contain — that is too crudely physical — but balance the rising might of China. The role has been waiting for India since 1949, and Bush is willing to pay a price for belated acceptance (of course, with continued and profuse denials). That is what Ronen Sen was able to cash in on, painstakingly striking an equilibrium between the least India can accept and the most the US president, who has his own domestic pressures to contend with, will concede. As the national security adviser, M.K. Narayanan, says, the treaty 'is as good a text as one can possibly get'.

It's only the lay public at home that has no time for any of this subterfuge or shadow-boxing. Senior officials have to rationalize their instinct because they can hardly admit they are pro-US because, as Kunwar Natwar Singh puts it, eight out of 10 Indian diplomats have children there. Others are waiting for the coveted green card. Even those millions whose need is only

for a ration card and who have no complexes about the US are mesmerized by the prospect of raw power. Pokhran released their exuberance because there was no pussyfooting in 1998 about energy. It was unambiguously admitted that the tests would provide a ‘valuable data base — useful in the design of nuclear weapons — of different yields, different applications and different delivery systems’ for our scientists. Moreover, they were designed to cover the full spectrum of nuclear weapons including fission and fusion (hydrogen/ thermonuclear) bombs and a sub kiloton (miniature) nuclear explosive device, and to generate data for ‘improved computer simulation’.

It has fallen to Manmohan Singh’s lot to have to reconcile all these disparate trends. A columnist with no executive responsibility can take a moral stand and declare that accepting American conditions would be tantamount to endorsing a hegemony that is all the more repugnant for being exercised by a country with Asian — Korean, Vietnamese, Afghan, Iraqi — blood on its hands. It becomes suspect when a practising politician says so unless he is prepared to carry his principles to their logical extreme and shun all — not selective — things American.

But those who have to cater to the present and future welfare of over a billion Indians are denied the luxury of such indulgence. They must take note of the popular mood which favours (for whatever base reason) a linkage with the American Dream. Their decisions must serve India’s security, economic and technological needs and the aspirations of the Indian people. They must end the sanctions that deny India sophisticated technology and fuel and exclude it from a specialized global marketplace. If such supping calls for an exceptionally long spoon, that, too, must be suffered, though few Indians will regard it as suffering.

India’s vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency had a precedent: though I.K. Gujral as external affairs minister during Operation Desert Shield refused to echo American diatribes against Saddam Hussein, near-bankrupt India voted with the US every time after the Americans cut off aid to Yemen for not supporting the coalition at the United Nations. These are harsh lessons that a prime minister cannot ignore.

Perhaps the agreement falls short of the ideal by placing curbs on the exercise of India’s sovereign authority. But then, there was a time when in the flush of idealistic nationhood, India spurned the chance of being the first Asian country with the bomb. Idealism was

trimmed in 1974 to meet one set of realities; it must be trimmed further to accommodate the consequences of our initial naiveté and adjust to another set of realities — this time the lone superpower's bargaining clout and the strong views of some of the NSG's 45 members — since we will gain something from the compromise.

The government's real failure lies in not selling that with vigour and conviction. There was an element of necessary stealth about the 1991 economic reforms but P.V. Narasimha Rao's astute management saved the day. Instead of taking the Congress rank and file into confidence, he and Singh discussed their plans with Lal Krishna Advani. Lest anyone question the legitimacy of liberalization, they also dug out Rajiv Gandhi's election manifesto which promised *inter alia* to replace a 'lethargic, inefficient and expensive' public sector with one that was 'leaner, more dynamic and profit-oriented'.

The obvious course now is to agree on specific safeguards with the IAEA next month, seal a deal with the NSG (where Nicholas Burns, the US under-secretary of state, has promised his good offices) and wait for the US Congress to accept both. Alternatively, if India just sits on the deal as the Left Front demands, it might as well kill it. The status of nuclear pariah would force the programme to go underground. And, worst of all, abandoning the treaty under pressure would proclaim to the world that there is no government in New Delhi.

Beyond that, the longer-term psychology of India's complex about the US recalls William B. Saxbe, the US ambassador in the Seventies, saying, 'When I call on cabinet ministers, the president, or governors, they all love to talk about their sons, sons-in-law and daughters in the US and how well they're doing and how well they like things. The next day I read in the papers the very same people are denouncing the US as a totally different kind of country.'

Those were the bleak years of the foreign hand. Even then, however, the hand was to be shunned in public and warmly clasped in private. By reconciling public protestation with private practice, Manmohan Singh's initiative promises to end a dichotomy that invites scorn. But the Left Front sees greater dividend in the ambiguity of dissimulation."

Article 3: Coding Results

Attitude Score: 0. The article does not express an opinion on whether India should have a maximalist (earning a +1 score) or minimalist (earning a -1 score) nuclear force. However, it does still express an opinion on general nuclear policy, obtaining a 0 score. This opinion is to support a civil nuclear agreement that demarcates India's nuclear programme into civilian and military dimensions, with the former safeguarded.

"They (India's leaders) must end the sanctions that deny India sophisticated technology and fuel and exclude it from a specialized global marketplace…The obvious course now is to agree on specific safeguards with the IAEA next month, seal a deal with the NSG (where Nicholas Burns, the US under-secretary of state, has promised his good offices) and wait for the US Congress to accept both. Alternatively, if India just sits on the deal as the Left Front demands, it might as well kill it. The status of nuclear pariah would force the programme to go underground. And, worst of all, abandoning the treaty under pressure would proclaim to the world that there is no government in New Delhi."

Policy Option Supported by Article: "Implement Nuclear Agreement that Lifts Sanctions, Retains Indian Control over Nuclear Force and Separates Civil from Military Programmes" (Option 1 in the 2005-8 Nuclear Agreement Discourse). This policy recommendation is made here:

"They (India's leaders) must end the sanctions that deny India sophisticated technology and fuel and exclude it from a specialized global marketplace…The obvious course now is to agree on specific safeguards with the IAEA next month, seal a deal with the NSG (where Nicholas Burns, the US under-secretary of state, has promised his good offices) and wait for the US Congress to accept both. Alternatively, if India just sits on the deal as the Left Front demands, it might as well kill it. The status of nuclear pariah would force the programme to go underground. And, worst of all, abandoning the treaty under pressure would proclaim to the world that there is no government in New Delhi."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: American Pressures

This issue was emphasised throughout the article. The article first detailed the American incentives in proposing a nuclear agreement to India. Then, in line with many other commentators supporting a nuclear deal, the author argued that this would represent a transactional agreement with the United States, rather than the start of a warm and wide-ranging alliance.

"George W. Bush's administration is more practical. As his Asia Society speech on the eve of his Indian visit made clear, Americans need India's expanding market for everything from washing machines to hamburgers. In foreign policy, Bush seeks an Asian ally other than Japan to not contain — that is too crudely physical — but balance the rising might of China. The role has been waiting for India since 1949, and Bush is willing to pay a price for belated acceptance (of course, with continued and profuse denials). That is what Ronen Sen was able to cash in on, painstakingly striking an equilibrium between the least India can accept and the most the US president, who has his own domestic pressures to contend with, will concede. As the national security adviser, M.K. Narayanan, says, the treaty 'is as good a text as one can possibly get'."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Bureaucratic Influences, Nuclear Force Technical Advancements

The article highlights that the defence scientists of India's nuclear bureaucratic complex had benefitted from the 1998 nuclear tests, that new nuclear force capabilities had emerged from the tests, and that these two factors were an influence on this nuclear policy question. However, it then argues that the Indian government should nevertheless take a broader view of India's societal and economic needs in considering a prospective nuclear agreement:

"It was unambiguously admitted that the tests would provide a "valuable data base - useful in the design of nuclear weapons - of different yields, different applications and different delivery systems" for our scientists… Moreover, they were designed to cover the full spectrum of nuclear weapons including fission and fusion (hydrogen/ thermonuclear) bombs and a sub kiloton (miniature) nuclear explosive device, and to generate data for 'improved

computer simulation'…Their (India's leaders) decisions must serve India's security, economic and technological needs and the aspirations of the Indian people."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Chinese Pressures

The article firstly noted the Chinese opposition to the civil nuclear agreement, and the traditional pro-China alignment of the Left Front Indian parliamentary grouping, as influences on the policy question:

"…Left Front obstructiveness must be a cause of great glee in Beijing, since it is possible that China will be spared the awkwardness of striking a dissonant note when the Nuclear Suppliers Group meets, as it is scheduled to do next May unless the US calls an earlier extraordinary meeting."

Secondly, the author observed that a prominent American incentive in proposing this agreement was to improve US-Indian strategic cooperation against China, before arguing elsewhere that the agreement was a net benefit for India:

"In foreign policy, Bush seeks an Asian ally other than Japan to not contain — that is too crudely physical — but balance the rising might of China."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Domestic Partisan Politics

The author emphasises that skilled domestic political and parliamentary management will be required for any final nuclear agreement to be successfully implemented:

"The government's real failure lies in not selling that (prospective nuclear agreement) with vigour and conviction. There was an element of necessary stealth about the 1991 economic reforms but P.V. Narasimha Rao's astute management saved the day. Instead of taking the Congress rank and file into confidence, he and Singh discussed their plans with Lal Krishna Advani… Alternatively, if India just sits on the (prospective nuclear) deal as the Left Front demands, it might as well kill it."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Economic and Developmental Needs

The author emphasises that India's urgent economic and developmental needs must be a key factor in considering whether to implement an agreement, supporting his broader argument in favour of an agreement:

"But those who have to cater to the present and future welfare of over a billion Indians are denied the luxury of such indulgence. They must take note of the popular mood which favours (for whatever base reason) a linkage with the American Dream. Their decisions must serve India's security, economic and technological needs and the aspirations of the Indian people."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Indian Global Aspirations

The author argued that India's global image should be included in discussions on whether to proceed with a nuclear agreement, and suggested that to abandon the proposed agreement would have damaging effects for this image:

"And, worst of all, abandoning the treaty under pressure would proclaim to the world that there is no government in New Delhi."

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Nuclear Doctrine

The article criticises the lack of clarity regarding India's nuclear doctrine, and observes that this may be resolved through progress toward a nuclear agreement:

"It is tempting to hope that the furore over the so-called 123 agreement will result in an examination and clarification of…India's nuclear aims…"

Perceived Influence on Nuclear Policy: Other State Pressures

Japan was cited as another state with which the United States wants a close strategic partnership directed against China. The author also mentions the ultimate agreement of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to exempt India from its sanctions as a key factor in implementing any final nuclear deal:

"Perhaps the agreement falls short of the ideal by placing curbs on the exercise of India's sovereign authority. But then, there was a time when in the flush of idealistic nationhood, India spurned the chance of being the first Asian country with the bomb. Idealism was trimmed in 1974 to meet one set of realities; it must be trimmed further to accommodate the consequences of our initial naiveté and adjust to another set of realities — this time the lone superpower's bargaining clout and the strong views of some of the NSG's 45 members — since we will gain something from the compromise."

Influences on Nuclear Policy Not Mentioned: CTBT/FMCT Pressures, Disarmament Pressures, NPT Membership Pressures, Pakistani Pressures